



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

Workshop on

SUBSIDIARITY AND DECENTRALIZATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Concept Note and Agenda

13 December 2023

16:00 – 18:00 | Seoul (GMT+ 9)

14:00 – 16:00 | Bangkok (GMT+ 7)

19:00 – 21:00 | Suva (GMT+ 12)

02:00 – 04:00 | New York (GMT-4)

Registration: <https://bit.ly/3QSuQKp>



Organized by

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

through the

Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) and its
Project Office - United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG)



BACKGROUND

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) adopted 11 principles of effective governance at its seventeenth session. The principles, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2018/12, highlight the need for pragmatic and ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The principles are designed to ensure effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for sustainable development at all levels.

One of these is the principle of subsidiarity: To promote government that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all people, central authorities should perform only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more intermediate or local level. CEPA has identified five commonly used strategies for promoting subsidiarity, namely: (1) fiscal federalism and decentralization; (2) strengthening urban governance; (3) strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems; (4) enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks; and (5) multilevel governance.

Engaging subnational governments and local communities in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies fosters inclusive and participatory implementation of the SDGs. To effectively decentralize and bring government to the people, countries and their constituent subnational governments must work in new ways and with new partners, effectively using all the governance, fiscal, and managerial mechanisms at their disposal. This often involves strengthening public sector capabilities at subnational levels and taking steps to ensure the financial stability of subnational authorities. Decentralization outcomes also depend on the quality of multi-level governance mechanisms in pursuit of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to the challenges of sustainable development.

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs has engaged leading experts and communities of practice in the preparation of a set of guidance notes that show how localization of the SDGs is not limited to integrating the global goals in local development plans but extends to strengthening decentralization, urban governance and local finance systems, and requires subnational authorities to be capable of effectively preventing and responding to external shocks. The benefits of decentralizing appropriate public sector functions and finances to subnational levels of government, and attention to multi-level governance arrangements are also covered. The guidance notes, available [here](#), include information on how governments can both assess the current status and measure progress to ensure that governance systems address long-term challenges. The notes outline the strategies, assess the extent to which they are being or have been adopted in other countries, and highlight the methods of implementation, opportunities to engage in peer learning and research, and pursue further international development cooperation in accordance with country needs.



FORMAT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

Using the notes as a main point of reference, DESA/DPIDG, together with its Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), is organizing an online facilitated workshop on 13 December 2023. The workshop is designed to share knowledge and provide a platform to connect participants with practitioners in other countries, the UN system and other organizations to take concrete, action-oriented steps towards more effective relations among levels of government in implementing the SDGs.

The workshop will

- Provide a platform to share knowledge and guidance on how to promote inclusiveness and subsidiarity for sustainable development;
- Increase understanding and awareness of the competencies and skills needed to apply the principle of subsidiarity with an emphasis on institutions at all levels;
- Highlight peer learning opportunities and research networks in specific practice areas; and
- Identify capacity development opportunities to enhance decentralization and relations with subnational governments that can be undertaken with the support of the UN system and other organizations.

The workshop is intended to benefit policymakers at central, regional and local levels, particularly in developing countries. Relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities, together with all relevant stakeholders, are invited to attend.

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Time (KST)	Agenda
16:00 - 16:10	<p>Facilitator: Ronald U. Mendoza, UN CEPA Member and South East Asia Regional Director, IDInsight</p> <p>Setting the scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs <p>Group Photo (1 mins)</p>
16:10 - 17:00	<p>National perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Romina Khurshid Alam, MP, Convener of the National Parliamentary Taskforce on SDGs, National Assembly of Pakistan • Governor Dakila Carlo “Dax” Cua, Governor of Quirino province and National President of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) • Mr. Tapan Mishra, UN Resident Coordinator for Mongolia (tbc)
17:00 - 17:45	<p>Strategies to operationalize the principle of subsidiarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Paul Smoke, Professor, Public Finance and Planning, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University, on <u>fiscal federalism and decentralization</u> • Mr. Brian Roberts, Emeritus Professor at the University of Canberra, Australia, on <u>strengthening urban governance</u> • Ms. Astrid Haas, Urban Economist and Adjunct Professor at the School of Cities at the University of Toronto, Extraordinary Lecturer at the African Tax Institute, University of Pretoria and Research Associate at the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, on <u>strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems</u> • Mr. Allan Lavell, Research Associate at the Latin American Social Faculty, Costa Rica and founding member of the Latin American Network for the Social Study of Disaster Prevention (LA RED), on <u>enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks</u> • Ms. Hanna Kleider, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Economy at King’s College London, on multi-level governance (tbc)
17:45 - 18:00	<p>Discussion of ways forward and closing</p>

Support for the sub-series on the principle of subsidiarity has been generously provided by the United Nations Project Office on Governance.



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