CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT:
A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

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• PRINCIPLES

• NOTIONS

• ACTIONS

• CHALLENGES
Since its very origin, the United Nations has had in its agenda the promotion of development

- The wording contained in the UN Charter (26 of June, 1945) could not be simpler and more meaningful:

  - “Promote social progress, and better standards of life, in larger freedom”
Specifically, since 2000, the General Assembly has stated*, in unambiguous ways, that governments should adopt actions for:

1. **People-centred development**
2. **People to have the right and ability to fully participate** in the social, economic and political life
3. **Strengthening institutions and consultative mechanisms for transparency** about the formulation of policies, and consultation with civil society
4. **Community participation** in the formulation of poverty reduction strategies
5. **Participation, as a means for people’s self-reliance and to promote a holistic approach to development**

* Political Declaration of the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly
6. Cooperation of civil society with government for planning, organizing and providing basic social services

7. Creating an enabling environment for a social dialogue among workers and employers to contribute to policies for the broad social progress

8. Strengthening mechanisms for the participation of all people, and for cooperation and dialogue among all levels of government and with civil society, for social integration

9. Assuring an enabling environment for civil society organizations to participate in the delivery of social services

10. Promoting the effective participation and contribution of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons, when drawing up legislation and programmes for poverty eradication and social inclusion
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• PRINCIPLES
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• CHALLENGES
CONCEPTS AND PRIORITIES (1)

• It may be useful to consider **two interrelated concepts**
  – **participation** of the people in public affairs about development
    • stemming from society spontaneously or by government promotion
    • **about matters in which the people can act more effectively than government**, individually or through civil society organizations
  – **citizens’ engagement** in public administration for development
    • as an outcome from government policies
    • **about matters in which government can be more effective if acting jointly with the people**, individually or through civil society organizations

• **Both concepts**
  – Are **intrinsically relevant**
    • They capture complementary aspects of the involvement of non-government actors (individuals and organizations) in public development affairs
  – Draw on **several disciplines**
    • Political science, sociology, development, public administration, law, etc.
  – Are **not yet stabilized**
    • Diverse meanings among practitioners, scholars, etc.
CONCEPTS AND PRIORITIES (2)

For different countries, *citizens engagement* has different nuances, and its potential contribution for development is seen differently.

1. **Political development**: direct democracy, widening of rights, fostering citizenship, etc.

2. **Modernization of public administration**: better information for decision making and performance in the public sector, more ownership over public policies and programmes by the people, enhanced transparency and accountability, less corruption, better incentives for responsiveness and efficiency, strategic inputs for coherent and coordinated policies and public service delivery, more trust in government, etc.

3. **Social development**: empowering of the people, civil society building, inclusion, social cohesion and social capital, better information for design and delivery of equitable policies and programs, etc.

4. **Volunteering and altruism**: more capital (financial, human, intellectual) for development initiatives and programs, additional channels to deliver government programs to special groups, etc.

5. **Tactical politics**: signals of democratization and inclusion, convenience of short-term alliances, dilution of public responsibilities, etc.
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The first section of this presentation included a list consists of actions which "governments should adopt", in accordance with the Political Declaration of the General Assembly at its 24th Special Session (2000).

The Declaration respects the sovereignty of the UN Member States

- Countries are to decide if, how and when to act along the lines highlighted by the UN General Assembly.
In this context, the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, within the UN Secretariat is committed to

- Provide a better understanding of the processes of participation and engagement
- Highlight their many positive potential contributions for development
- Share information on institutions, practices and legal frameworks observable in different settings
- Monitor trends, innovations, successful experiences and failures or shortcomings
- Contribute to capacity building (training of human resources in government and in civil society, and institution building) to facilitate actions determined by the countries themselves
To this aim, the United Nations Secretariat needs to

- Work closely with practitioners and experts from many different countries in all regions
  - in distinct stages of development
  - in different socio-political and cultural circumstances
  - in different political, juridical and institutional regimes

- Including interested individuals and organizations from government, as well as from the private sector and civil society
  - At the national and local levels
- **Ongoing actions of the Division of Public Administration and Development Management**

  - **Construction of a global knowledge base** (Public Administration Knowledge Space, PAKS)
    - Comprising all 192 UN Member States
      - Legislation
      - Practices
      - Analysis

  - **Technical cooperation projects for capacity building** with several countries in different regions

  - **Preparation and dissemination of tools**, such as guidelines and online courses

  - **Publications** on key related subjects
DPADM/DMB: PAST PUBLICATIONS ON CITIZENS’ ENGAGEMENT

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
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• PRINCIPLES
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• CHALLENGES
To **foster the process of participation** in adequate manners, as a powerful means to promote development, in particular to reach the Millennium Development Goals

- Facing **cultural conditions, political interests** of various kinds, and **economic or financial constraints**
- Building upon **ongoing social and political development processes**
- Animation of **actors, leadership, organization** and **networking**
- Establishment and enforcement of **freedoms and rights**
CHALLENGES (2)

• To promote citizens engagement as part of the overall modernization and enhancement of public administration and government
  – Pursuing convenient ways to look at the evolving nature of government
  – Identifying policy areas and services in which citizens engagement is viable and are likely to be enhanced by successfully engaging the people
  – Establishing convenient norms and an effective juridical framework
    • Implementing adequate procedures
    • Considering existing institutions and mechanisms of representative democracy
    • Facing cultural conditions, political interests of various kinds, and economic or financial constraints
CHALLENGES (3)

• To realize how **the scope of public affairs about development is evolving**, in different countries, particularly as a result of technological change (such as innovation in Information and Telecommunications Technologies)
  
  – Affordability, connectivity and networking are advancing considerably
  – People interact among themselves more easily
  – Previously private concerns are often turning into public affairs
  – Governments have to be aware of these phenomena and adopt adequate strategies to foster development through **enhancing participatory governance**

END OF PRESENTATION
APPENDIX A

SOME KEY QUOTES FROM THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, DECLARATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS
CHARTERS, DECLARATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS (1)

Charter of the United Nations
First paragraph

- Expresses the determination of the peoples of the world to "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom"

50th Session
General Assembly

- Governance and public administration were discussed and provided an agreed agenda for actions by governments in the area of governance.

2005 World Summit

- Underlined the need for countries to enjoy good governance and the rule of law in order to achieve sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger.

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
Political Declaration
24th Special Session
(December 2000)
General Assembly

- “The maintenance of peace and security within and among nations, democracy, the rule of law, the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, effective, transparent and accountable governance, (...) are some of the essential elements for the realization of social and people-centered sustainable development”.

Idem

- “Governments should adopt an integrated focus in order to ensure that social development objectives are incorporated in all areas of governmental decision making. In this connection, the General Assembly recommends taking the following further initiatives at the local, national, regional and international levels for the further implementation of the ten commitments adopted at the World Summit for Social Development”.

Idem

- “Governments, while designing and implementing their development policies, should ensure that people are placed at the centre of development. Therefore, people must have the right and the ability to participate fully in the social, economic and political life of their societies”.

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
CHARTERS, DECLARATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS (3)

- "Strengthen national institutions and consultative mechanisms for economic policy formulation, involving improved transparency and consultation with civil society."

- "Ensure community participation in the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction strategies and programmes with a view to increasing people's self-reliance and promoting a holistic approach to the various needs of the people. Civil society can play an important role in cooperation with national Governments in planning, organizing and providing basic social services."

- "Create an enabling environment for social dialogue by ensuring effective representation and participation of workers' and employers' organizations in order to contribute to the development of policies for achieving broad-based social progress."
MANDATES (1)

Idem

• “Strengthen mechanisms for the participation of all people, and promote cooperation and dialogue among all levels of government and civil society as contributions to social integration”.

Idem

• “Ensure an enabling environment for civil society organizations, inter alia, to facilitate their participation in the delivery of social services in a coordinated, democratic, transparent and accountable manner”.

Idem

• “Promote the effective participation and contribution of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons when drawing up legislation and programmes for poverty eradication and social inclusion”.

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
MANDATES (2)

• “Recognize the primary responsibility of Governments for providing or ensuring access to basic social services for all; develop sustainable, pro-poor health and education systems by promoting community participation in planning and managing basic social services, including health promotion and disease prevention; and diversify approaches to meet local needs, to the extent possible, utilizing local skills and resources”.

• “Encourage Governments and international financial institutions to improve the ongoing dialogue on the design, implementation and reform of structural adjustment programmes, ensuring the full integration of social and economic frameworks for protecting social policies and programmes so that such programmes are genuinely nationally owned and driven; such dialogue would benefit from consultations by Governments with relevant actors and organizations of civil society”.

• “Ensure transparency and accountability by both Governments and international financial institutions for improved efficacy of structural adjustment programmes and fulfilment of social development goals (and) establish participatory mechanisms to undertake assessment of the social impact of structural adjustment programmes and reform packages before, during and after the implementation process with a view to mitigating their negative impact and developing policies to improve their positive impact on social development goals.”

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
“Good governance comprises the rule of law, effective State institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights, and opportunities for all citizens to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. As a first step to sound governance, all countries need constitutional and administrative laws that provide for different branches of government, including a legislative branch and an independent judiciary. To ensure the rule of law, promotion of a culture of lawfulness is essential, enforced through a system of crime prevention and criminal justice that is effective at crime control, but is also just and protective of human rights.”

The United Nations Development Agenda: Development for All
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations
October 2007
“Good governance requires that governments **continuously strive to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of all public institutions and government administrative procedures.** The impact of these efforts can be strengthened by policies and procedures to secure the **accountability** of government operations to **ensure ethical conduct** and to **avoid corruption**. (…) such measures include a high degree of **transparency** and accountability in the public sector through such mechanisms as parliamentary public accounts committees, national auditors and appointment of ombudsmen. Implementing said policies may be assisted by decentralization as far as possible in order to encourage regional and local development.

One of the many implications of these principles is that **all individuals should have opportunities to participate in the political system.** ”

*The United Nations Development Agenda: Development for All*

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations

October 2007
“In relationships between the state and the citizen, fundamental freedoms and human rights create a climate enabling personal initiatives to contribute to socioeconomic development. Development of public policy can be improved by including civil society in public decision-making and implementation.”

*The United Nations Development Agenda: Development for All*
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations
October 2007
APPENDIX B

THE UN SYSTEM

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
• The United Nations is a global international organization with 192 Member States

• Its mandates (fundamentally the UN Charter) entrust the UN with fundamental responsibilities:
  – preserving peace and security
  – overcoming humanitarian crises
  – maintaining a productive political dialogue, and
  – promoting development for all

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
To assist Member States in promoting development, the UN relies on:

- The core **Secretariat** (specifically, the **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, DESA or UNDESA** *), looking at global cross-cutting development challenges

- Five **Regional Commissions** which are part of the Secretariat and are focused on all Member States in respective large geographical regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and West Asia)

- **Specialized agencies and programs** (for example, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNIDO, FAO, ILO, WIPO, UNDP, UNEP, WB, IMF and many others of similar relevance), which focus on particular sectors

*DESA is organized in the following Divisions and Offices: Development Policy and Analysis Division; Division for the Advancement of Women; Division for Public Administration and Development Management; Division for Social Policy and Development; Division for Sustainable Development; Financing for Development Office; Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination; Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women; Office of the Under Secretary General; Population Division; Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests; and the Statistics Division.*
The UN fosters a Development Agenda established by resolutions, declarations and mandates from Member States, through the regular work of the UN Governing Bodies (General Assembly, Economic and Social Council) and periodic special conferences or high-level meetings.

- This Agenda defines that development should be:
  - **integral**: balancing economic and social aspects, in a context of expanding freedoms under the Rule of Law.
  - **Inclusive**: being people-centered and looking after the diverse necessities of all social groups, fundamentally the specific needs of women, the elderly and the young, indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups (the poor, populations affected by conflicts or crisis, etc.).
  - **sustainable**: securing permanence over the mid and long run and maintaining accomplishments over time to benefit successive generations, in particular by warranting a healthy natural environment.
  - **autonomous**: being based on the self-determination of nations, nationally owned and driven policies and programmes, people’s self reliance.

[http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/]
Several UN declarations and resolutions underline that development is favored by:

- Maintenance of peace and security
- Adequate governance
- Prevalence of the Rule of Law
- Democracy
- Promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Transparency, accountability, coordination and cooperation of governance institutions, at all levels of government
- Consultation by government to civil society and the private sector, dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders and government, participation of people and communities in political life and public decision-making, in relation to:
  - all stages of development policy making and public service delivery: legislation, design, formulation, planning, implementation, management, assessment and reform

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
• The **Development Agenda** is fostered by the UN Secretariat along these converging lines, through three types of actions:
  
  – **Normative actions**, resulting from the intergovernmental process
  
  – **Analysis of key development challenges** faced by countries around the World, particularly on emerging issues
  
  – **Technical cooperation for capacity building actions**

• The contributions of DPADM/DMB to Member States on Development Management are precisely to be made along these three action lines

http://www.UNPAN.org/DPADM/
Coordination among these development-oriented entities is looked after in many ways, specially through the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) *, which comprises several thematic clusters:

- Trade; Macroeconomics and Finance; Sustainable Development and Human Settlements; Social Development and Social Integration; Advancement of Women; Countries in Special Situations; Governance and Institution Building; Science, Technology and Productive Sectors; Human Rights; Statistics; and Population.

- In particular, the Cluster on Governance and Institution Building is headed by DPADM/DESA, and co-chaired by UNDP, and also includes: OHRLLS, OHCHR, OSAA and the Regional Commissions for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

* ECESA is headed by DESA and includes the following 18 entities of the UN System: Economic Commission for Africa; Economic Commission and Social for Asia and the Pacific; Economic Commission for Europe; Economic Commission for Latin America; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; United Nations Development Programme United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Program; United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; United Nations Research Institute for Social Development; United Nations University; United Nations Institute for Training and Research;
The Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

- Supports the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly with system wide guidance for economic and social development
- Assists governments in agenda-setting and decision-making on development issues at the global level
- Promotes and supports international cooperation to achieve development for all
Within DESA, the **Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)**

- Assists the UN intergovernmental bodies by providing information and policy-oriented analysis on public administration matters geared to development, specially to the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

- Serves Member States in improving public service delivery, building enhanced public institutions and increasing capacities in the public sector, through research, information sharing, advocacy, advice, training and technological modernization (particularly ICT)

- Operates the Online Network on Public Administration (UNPAN), [www.unpan.org](http://www.unpan.org)
END OF APPENDIX