Promoting Professionalism and Ethics in the Public Service

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What is professionalism and ethics in the public service?

- **Professionalism:**
  - the quest for excellence
  - based on knowledge, competence, and skills

- **Ethics:**
  - the proper exercise of judgement and discretion
  - based on accepted values and norms
How can professionalism and ethics prevent corruption?

- Corruption:
  - the misuse of public office for private gain
  - taking advantage of opportunities and weak systems

- Professionalism and Ethics:
  - vaccination against corruption
  - helps honest public servants stay honest
Why is the UN promoting professionalism and ethics?

UN System works to:
- promote respect for human rights and peace
- protect the environment
- fight disease
- promote development and reduce poverty

A well-performing public service in Member States is a precondition to all these objectives.

A well-performing public service is based on its professionalism and integrity.
Who in the UN Secretariat is involved?

- **Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs**
  - promotes a multi-dimensional and integrated approach to development

- **Division for Public Economics and Public Administration**
  - assists in intergovernmental policy deliberations
  - assists Member States in improving public administration and finance systems
  - supports capacity-building, including institutional reinforcement and human resources development
Why is DPEPA involved?

- General Assembly Resolution 50/225
  - Recognizes important link between public administration and development
  - Stresses importance of the public service in development process
  - Sees value in strengthening professionalism and ethics of public servants
What are DPEPA’s activities?

- Regional and policy fora
- Publications
- Public Service Charter and Code of Conduct for Africa
- Information system for public service ethics in Africa
- Policy advisory services
- Partnerships with international, national, and non-governmental organizations
Conferences

- Regional conference for Central and Eastern Europe, Greece, 1997 (21 countries)
- National conference for Brazil, 1997
- Regional conference for Africa, 1998 (35 countries)
Publications:
www.un.org/esa/governance

- Professionalism and Ethics in the Public Service (Overview)
- Promoting Ethics in the Public Service (Brazil)
- Public Service in Transition: Ethical Values and Standards (Central & Eastern Europe)
- The Civil Service in Africa: New Challenges, Professionalism and Ethics (forthcoming)
African Public Service Charter and Code of Conduct

- Outcome of the Rabat Declaration, issued at 2nd Pan-African Conference of Civil Service Ministers, 1998
- Working group of Civil Service Ministers drafting document in 1999
- Presentation at the 3rd Pan-African Conference of Civil Service Ministers, 2000
Information System: Public Sector Ethics in Africa

- Joint project with UNDP Africa
- Comparative study of 10 African countries
- Information on ethics policies, programmes, and institutions
- Conceptual framework covers preventive, monitoring, and enforcement efforts
- Outputs: regional database and information system and 10 country reports
- Anticipated Outcomes: peer review, emergence of gaps and best practices in the region
Participating Countries

1999 / 2000

**West Africa:**
- Cameroon
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Nigeria
- Senegal

**East Africa:**
- Kenya
- Uganda

**Southern Africa:**
- Madagascar
- Namibia
- South Africa
Policy Advice

- Namibia’s Promotion of Ethics and Combatting Corruption Conference
- Thailand’s International Law Enforcement Academy Seminar for senior officials
- UNDP PACT’s assessment mission to Yemen
Partnerships

- International: UNDP, OAU, OECD, CAFRAD,
- National: Brazil, Canada, Greece, Morocco, United States
- Non-governmental: TI, AAPAM, APSA, GCA, IAD
What have we learned? (1)

- Sustainable development depends on good governance
- Good governance counts on a well-performing public service
- A well-performing public service fights corruption and encourages professionalism and ethics
What have we learned? (2)

It is not easy to promote professionalism and ethics when countries face:

- a lack of countervailing forces to over-centralized states
- politicization of administrations
- citizens unaware of their rights and obligations
- lack of resources due to abject poverty
- lack of livable public service wages
How do we move from moral exhortation to practical tools? (1)

- Government machinery options: e.g. One centralized anti-corruption agency vs. Better coordination of many agencies?
- Preventive legal and regulatory framework: e.g. Financial assets disclosure system, workable disciplinary procedures, whistle-blower protection, etc.
How do we move from moral exhortation to practical tools? (2)

- Training Tools: e.g. Ethics training modules, Codes of conduct manuals, etc.
- Ethics Advice: e.g. for ministers and other high-ranking officials and their staff, ethics advisories for agencies, etc.
- Partnerships: public service unions, professional associations, training institutes, etc.
UN’s future activities in this area?

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“The UN is your world.”
What would you have us do?
Contact

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