



2024 UN PUBLIC SERVICE FORUM AND AWARDS CEREMONY

WORKSHOP 1

Gender-Inclusive Leadership and Public Sector Innovation
for Sustainable Development: Empowering Women
Leaders for Future-ready Public Administration

CONCEPT NOTE

Organiser: Institutions for the Sustainable Development Goals Branch (ISDGB) /
Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) / United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) in collaboration with the
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



Introduction

The 2024 United Nations Public Service Forum will take place in Incheon, the Republic of Korea from 24-26 June 2024 under the theme 'Fostering Innovation amid Global Challenges: A Public Sector Perspective'.

The Forum will be comprised of a series of workshops where various elements related to the overall theme will be explored in more detail. Workshop 1 will explore strategies to promote gender-inclusive leadership within public administration and gender-responsive public services.

Objective

The workshop aims to:

- Share insights and best practices on advancing women's leadership within the public sector.
- Promote knowledge exchange among countries, focussing on lessons learned from gender equality action plans.
- Foster innovation and responsive public service delivery through gender equality strategies.

Focus

The workshop aims to address the imperative for institutional strengthening to advance progress on gender equality, focussing on the intersection of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which emphasises women's participation and equal leadership opportunities, and SDG 16 which promotes just peaceful and inclusive societies. Prioritising initiatives to enhance women's participation and leadership in public institutions can foster more responsive and accountable governance. More inclusive national and subnational public institutions not only promote gender equality but also enhance public sector gender-responsiveness and accountability to women. However, significant underrepresentation of women persists, particularly in decision-making roles, hindering progress towards parity. Urgent action is needed to address this imbalance, as highlighted by the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Report estimate of 140 years needed to attain equal representation in workplace leadership.

Organised under the project "[Building capacities for promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at national and local levels](#)", funded by the Government of Italy, the workshop will promote capacity development by showcasing successful strategies to prioritise gender equality in public administration at the national and local levels and promote women's career progression towards leadership positions in the public sector.

The main objective is to reflect upon concrete, actionable strategies for promoting gender equality and inclusivity in leadership roles. The workshop will aim to enhance understanding of gender-inclusive leadership, explaining its significance and implementation challenges within public administration. Discussions will explore various dimensions of inclusive leadership, examining how it promotes diversity and equity within public sector agencies.

Additionally, the workshop will explore how gender equality strategies can foster gender-responsive public services and drive public sector innovation to attain sustainable development goals.

The themes to be explored include institutional and policy frameworks for gender equality, human resource policies for inclusivity and equal opportunities, and evidence-based analysis to monitor progress toward gender parity within public administration. In particular, the workshop will promote knowledge exchange among countries, focussing on lessons learned from gender equality action plans in the public sector with a specific emphasis on the project countries in the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions.

Moreover, the workshop aims to foster collaboration among stakeholders engaged in gender equality initiatives within the public sector. By establishing a platform for dialogue and exchange, participants will have an opportunity to share experiences, challenges, and good practices, as well as to forge partnerships. This collaborative approach is essential for harnessing collective expertise and resources to tackle systemic barriers and promote transformation.

Through this focussed approach, the workshop aims to drive innovation and progress toward building future-ready and gender-inclusive public institutions that contribute to sustainable development.

Structure

This workshop will consist of an opening session, seven thematic sessions and a closing session. At the closing of each session, the rapporteur will present key messages.

Session 1: Strategies to Promote Gender Equality in Public Administration – Lessons Learned in Asia and the Pacific

This session will describe the experience of project countries in Asia regarding the development of an action plan to advance gender equality in the public sector. It will examine strategies to enhance the presence and leadership of women, addressing barriers to their participation and advancement both at the national and subnational levels of government. The session will also assess the impact of initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality in the public sector, considering their contribution to sustainable development and the realisation of inclusive governance objectives.

Guiding questions:

- 1. What challenges and solutions have project countries in Asia encountered in their efforts to enhance the representation and leadership of women in public administration at both national and subnational levels and what lessons can be drawn from their experiences?*
- 2. What measurable impacts have initiatives promoting gender equality in the public sector demonstrated, and how do these contribute to broader goals of sustainable development and inclusive governance in each country?*

Session 2: Strategies to Promote Gender Equality in Public Administration – Lessons Learned in Africa

This session will mirror the structure of Session 1, focusing on the experiences of project countries in Africa as they formulate action plans to promote gender equality within the public sector.

Guiding questions:

1. *How do project countries in Africa navigate and address socio-cultural, economic, and political challenges in their pursuit of gender equality within the public administration and what strategies have proven effective in overcoming these obstacles?*
2. *In what ways do initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in the public sector in Africa contribute to advancing sustainable development goals and fostering more inclusive governance structures and what key insights can be gleaned from these experiences?*

Session 3: Strategies for Advancing Gender Equality in Public Administration

This session will delve into the practical aspects of implementing strategies for advancing gender equality within public administration. Drawing on real-world examples and case studies, speakers will share insights into effective strategies, challenges encountered, and lessons learned during the implementation process. Discussions will cover topics such as policy development, institutional reforms, capacity building and monitoring mechanisms.

Guiding questions:

1. *What are the essential components of successful policy development and institutional reforms necessary for advancing gender equality in public administration and how can these be tailored to suit diverse contexts and challenges?*
2. *How can monitoring mechanisms be effectively designed and integrated into the implementation process to ensure sustainable progress toward gender equality in public administration?*

Session 4: Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions

This session will present the UNDP Gender Equality Seal as a tool for advancing gender equality within public institutions worldwide, aiming to dismantle discriminatory norms by improving skills in delivering gender-responsive policies. The Seal sets standards and benchmarks, guiding institutions to integrate gender perspectives throughout the policy cycle and organisational structures. Additionally, it encourages participation and accountability and assesses policy impacts.

Guiding questions:

1. *How are countries applying the Seal in diverse contexts to address the specific challenges faced by public institutions in promoting gender equality?*
2. *What strategies can public institutions employ to ensure sustained commitment to gender equality beyond the attainment of the Seal?*

Session 5: Key Messages for the UNPSF Report

The session will provide a concise summary of the conclusions drawn from earlier sessions of the workshop. Participants will engage in a discussion to identify key messages that will be presented in the plenary session on the last day of the UN Public Service Forum. Led by the workshop rapporteur, this collaborative effort will ensure that significant insights and recommendations are captured and integrated into the Forum's Rapporteur's Report.

Guiding questions:

- 1. What are the conclusions derived from the discussions and insights shared throughout the earlier workshop sessions?*
- 2. How do these insights inform our understanding of gender equality in public administration?*

Session 6: Gender-Responsive Public Services

This session will assess how gender-responsive approaches to service provision contribute to sustainable development. Discussions will explore the effectiveness of such approaches in ensuring equitable access to essential services and addressing the diverse needs of all individuals, thereby promoting inclusivity and leaving no one behind. The session will also investigate the interconnection between greater representation of women in leadership positions and gender-responsive service delivery.

Guiding questions:

- 1. How do gender-responsive approaches to service provision contribute to sustainable development goals, particularly in terms of promoting equitable access to essential services and addressing the diverse needs of all individuals?*
- 2. How does greater representation of women in leadership positions correlate with the implementation and effectiveness of gender-responsive service delivery and what key insights can be drawn from this interconnection to enhance the inclusivity and responsiveness of public services?*

Session 7: Guidance on Drafting and Implementing an Action Plan on Gender Equality in Public Administration

This session will provide guidance on formulating and executing action plans aimed at promoting gender equality within public administration. Participants will gain practical insights into the drafting process and effective implementation strategies. Expert speakers will share insights from good practices, tools, and resources to develop and implement impactful strategies to advance gender equality at both national and subnational levels of public administration.

Guiding questions:

- 1. What key elements should be considered in formulating an action plan to promote gender equality within public administration and how can these elements be adapted to address various contextual factors and obstacles?*

2. *What strategies and resources are available to support the drafting and implementation of action plans aimed at advancing gender equality in public administration and how can participants leverage these tools to maximise their impact?*

Session 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

This final session will summarise key conclusions and messages from earlier workshop discussions. Participants will collaborate to distill actionable recommendations for advancing gender equality within public administration.

Guiding questions:

1. *What are the most significant conclusions and messages drawn from the comprehensive discussions held throughout the workshop sessions*
2. *How can these insights inform actionable recommendations for promoting gender equality in public administration?*

Organisational Details

- This workshop is organized by the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) / Institutions for the Sustainable Development Goals Branch (ISDGB) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Participants are expected to include officials from central and local government, policymakers, public sector experts, practitioners, academics and civil society representatives engaged in advancing gender-responsive public service, international organisations and agencies dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- The workshop will be conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation available in French.

Contact Persons

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