



Workshop on:

“Developing effective and accountable public institutions for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”

Baku, Azerbaijan

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Session I. Opening session: The role of effective, inclusive and accountable public sector institutions in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of SDGs

Keynote Address by Professor Paola Severino

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and participate in this workshop on the role of effective, inclusive and accountable public sector institutions in the implementation of the 2030 SDG Agenda. I would like to thank UN DESA and UNDP for organising this event, and I am also very grateful to the government of Azerbaijan for hosting the event in the beautiful city of Baku.

The focus of our 3-day discussion will be centred around the importance of effective and accountable public sector institutions, and the fundamental issue will be why good governance in the public sector is so important. Good governance, especially in the public sector, is fundamental to economic growth, political stability and security. It leads to a maximisation of economic benefits in a globalised economy and accelerates economic transition. It implies the creation of national frameworks of economic policies, institutions and legislation, in which businesses can thrive and the confidence of investors grows. It also



facilitates economic connectivity among countries and regions. Good governance in the public sector is also a very important component of Sustainable Development Goals. It directly contributes to the SDG 16 through promoting inclusive societies, affording equal access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Based on its mandate, the OSCE actively supports participating States in implementing their good governance and anti-corruption commitments and translating these into national policies. In 2003 with the adoption of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension at the Ministerial Council in Maastricht, participating States committed themselves to cooperating on economic, good governance and sustainable development issues. The 2012 Dublin Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Good Governance and Combating Corruption, Money-Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism, the Basel Decision No. 5/14 on Corruption Prevention, the Hamburg 2016 MC Decision No. 4/16 on Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity, the Vienna MC Decision No. 8/17 on Promoting Economic Participation in the OSCE Area and the Milan MC Decision No. 5/18 on Human Capital Development in the Digital Era all showed strong political commitment and enhanced the mandate of the OSCE to promote good governance, enhance economic connectivity and combat corruption.

While corruption in general is detrimental to the development and social well-being of any given country, corruption in the public sector is especially dangerous since this sector often represents a major part of a State's budget. This means that very often many essential State services, such as healthcare, education and welfare, to name a few, are left with fewer resources.



The effects of corruption in the public sector can ultimately result in national insecurity and instability. That is why preventing and combating corruption should, therefore, be undertaken on both national and international scales and should benefit from mutual and multilateral co-operation.

The OSCE has always been active in supporting participating States in their anti-corruption efforts, including strengthening governance in the public sector by providing comprehensive capacity-building and advocacy support in the area of preventing and combating corruption in the public sector. I would like to draw to your attention two practical examples of the OSCE's work which, in my opinion, contribute to the ongoing reform process in some participating States:

It is critical to highlight the important role of civil society organisations in the reform process, as their participation guarantees representation and inclusion while contributing to strengthening the control of public sector governance. That is why in 2017, the OSCE started implementation of the extra-budgetary project “Fostering a participatory approach towards preventing corruption in Central Asia”. The project is aimed at strengthening co-operation among government institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations in the Central Asian region to foster a participatory approach towards implementing national corruption prevention policies. Within the framework of this project the OSCE organised a series of capacity-building activities for government officials, civil society representatives and private sector stakeholders where they discussed transparency and civil society inclusion in budget-making processes at all levels, civil society inclusion in national anti-corruption strategies and action plan implementation, transparency in decision-making through introducing e-government and e-procurement systems, etc. The OSCE also organised a number of targeted, tailor-made workshops for government officials and civil society representatives on how to work together in conducting public hearings and



debates on draft anti-corruption legislation, developing methodologies to monitor and evaluate anti-corruption legislation and to perform anti-corruption screening of new legislation.

Another project that I would like to highlight is aimed at supporting an Open Government Partnership. Within the framework of this project the OSCE will conduct a series of events focused on best practices and experiences in the use of open government initiatives to enhance transparency and accountability in public administration and prevent corruption. The events will bring together experts, government officials and members of civil society organisations from the OSCE region.

The OSCE recognised the important role of civil society in preventing and combating corruption in a number of guiding documents, including the *OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension* and the *Istanbul Charter for European Security*. Later, the OSCE participating States reiterated their support for the Organization in fostering co-operation between governments and civil society in the area of good governance. As you can see from the examples mentioned earlier, the OSCE pays special attention to encouraging and facilitating active participation of civil society in the reform process, and this is in line with the main guiding documents for the OSCE second dimension as well as with Sustainable Development Goal 17, which recognises multi-stakeholder partnerships as important vehicles for mobilising and sharing the knowledge, expertise and financial resources required for the successful reforms.

Thank you for your attention.