



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



THE ARAB REGIONAL FORUM ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Effective Public Governance for Sustainable Development:

Modernizing Public Administration in the Arab Region: Challenges and Opportunities

12-13 November 2024,

Kempinski Amman Hotel, Jordan.

Agenda:

Day 1: 12 November

08:30 - 09:00	Registration and Welcome Coffee
09:00 - 09:30	Opening remarks and Keynote Address <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNESCWA• IIAS• IASIA• OECD-SIGMA• MBRSG
09:30 - 11:00	Session 1: Governance and Public Administration in the Arab Region <p>This session will provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of public administration in the Arab region, highlighting key challenges and variations across subregions. It will examine issues like government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and control of corruption, offering insights into how these factors influence governance and public service delivery. Participants will discuss the progress made in recent years and identify areas where further efforts are required to achieve effective, accountable, and inclusive governance.</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the most pressing governance challenges facing the Arab region today, and how do these challenges vary across subregions?• What lessons can be drawn from the countries that have made significant progress in governance reforms?

- In countries experiencing conflict or political instability, what are the primary obstacles to public administration reform?
- What key actions should governments prioritize to improve governance and public administration over the next five years?
- What role can regional and international cooperation play in supporting governance reforms?

Chair: Youness Abouyoub, UNESCWA

Speakers:

- 1- Joaquin Salido Marcos, UNESCWA
- 2- Nathalie Grand, UNESCWA
- 3- Jala El Akoum, UNESCWA
- 4- Miriam Allam, Head of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme

11:00 - 11:15

Coffee Break

11:15 - 12:45

Session 2: Enhancing Public Service Delivery for All

This session focuses on strategies to improve public service delivery across the Arab region. Panelists will explore the role of efficient public administration in ensuring equitable access to essential services like healthcare, education, and social protection. Discussions will cover challenges such as financial constraints, capacity building, and coordination gaps, with an emphasis on innovative solutions and best practices to enhance service delivery in both stable and fragile contexts.

Guiding Questions:

- What are the most significant barriers to providing equitable access to essential services (healthcare, education, social protection) across the Arab region?
- How can public administrations improve their efficiency in service delivery, particularly in countries with limited financial resources?
- What are some best practices for promoting inclusivity in public service delivery?
- What are the innovative solutions or successful models from other regions that could be adapted to improve public service delivery in the Arab context?
- How can Arab countries foster regional collaboration to share knowledge and best practices in service delivery?

Chair: Bardhyl Dobra, Deputy Minister of Interior and Public Administration (The Republic of Kosovo)

Speakers:

1. Nick Thijs, OECD/SIGMA Senior Policy Adviser, Country Manager for Egypt, Team Leader for Service Delivery
2. Eko Prasajo, PA National Academy, Indonesia
3. Khalid Abu Ismail, UNESCWA
4. Fadi Salem, Director of research Department (MBRSG)

	5. Shorouq Abdelghani, Service and Public Admin. Commission - SPAC, Jordan
12:45 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:30	<p>Session 3: Building Trust and Promoting Transparency</p> <p>Trust and transparency are key pillars of good governance. This session will delve into the mechanisms that can enhance transparency in government actions and build public trust. It will highlight the importance of open data, anti-corruption measures, and accountability frameworks, showcasing successful examples from the region. The discussion will focus on how these elements contribute to effective public administration and promote citizen engagement.</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main challenges to public trust in the Arab region and how can these be addressed? • In what ways can enhanced transparency help build trust and address key issues such as corruption? • How can transparency best be improved? What are the different mechanisms and tools (e.g. technology) that can help achieve this? • What is needed for Arab states to effectively build trust and enhance transparency? <p>Chair: Fadi Salem, Director of research Department (MBRSG)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kinda Hattar, Transparency International 2. Abeer Mdanat, Transparency International, Amman 3. Pilar Ormijana, OECD/SIGMA Senior Policy Adviser, Regional Manager for the EU Neighbourhood South 4. Ahmed Laamoumri, Anti-corruption Commission Morocco 5. Hazem Al-Namla, UNDP consultant
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee Break
15:45 - 17:15	<p>Session 4: Inclusion and Participation for Effective Governance</p> <p>Inclusive governance ensures that the needs of all citizens, including marginalized groups, are addressed. This session will explore how participatory processes can be strengthened to ensure public administration is more responsive and equitable. Topics include the role of civil society, youth engagement, gender inclusion, and mechanisms for citizen participation in policy-making, emphasizing the importance of a people-centred approach to governance.</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the different challenges to increase participation and inclusion in the Arab region and how can these be addressed? • How can Arab states ensure public administrations are more equitable and responsive to people’s needs? • What good practices and lessons learned exist when it comes to improving participation and inclusion?

Chair: Lamia Moubayed Bissat, Bassil Fleihan Institute – UNCEPA

Speakers:

1- Abla Amawi, Senator, (Jordanian Senate)

2- Apollinaire Mupiganyi, Transparency International Rwanda

3- Tina Zintl, Senior Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)

4- Julien Courson, Transparency International Lebanon

Day 2: 13 November

09:00 – 10:30

Session 5: Public Sector in Conflict and Fragility: Navigating Challenges

In conflict-affected and fragile contexts, public administration faces unique challenges. This session will examine how conflict and instability impact governance and public service delivery, exploring strategies to strengthen institutions in these settings. Discussions will include approaches to rebuilding trust, restoring public services, and promoting resilience in the face of protracted crises, emphasizing the role of public administration in peacebuilding and recovery.

Guiding questions:

- What are the key factors that allow public administration systems to function effectively during conflicts or crises?
- How can governments proactively build resilience within their institutions?
- What major challenges do public administrations encounter in conflict-affected and fragile settings?
- How can national public administrations successfully collaborate with international organizations, NGOs, and donors in post-conflict recovery?
- What mechanisms can be implemented to ensure transparency and accountability in fragile and conflict-affected areas, where corruption and weakened oversight are prevalent?
- What are the best practices for ensuring that essential public services (such as health, education, and social services) either continue or quickly resume in conflict and fragile settings?
- What role do digital solutions play in this process?
- In regions experiencing fragility and conflict, there is often significant distrust towards public institutions. What approaches have been successful in restoring trust between the public and government in post-conflict settings?
- What insights can be gained from successful case studies of public sector recovery in fragile contexts?

Chair: Hassan Diab, ARADO - League of Arab States.

Speakers:

- 1- Tamer Qarmout, Professor Doha Institute
- 2- Pamela Chemali, public administration, governance and development professional
- 3- Lamia Moubayed Bissat, Bassil Fleihan Institute – UNCEPA
- 4- Naeem Al-Mutawakel, UNESCWA

10:30 - 10:45

Coffee Break

10:45 - 12:30

Session 6: Public sector workforce and Digital transformation

Skills and Competencies for the Next Generation of Public Servants

Future-ready public servants are crucial for effective governance. This session will focus on the skills and competencies required for the evolving demands of public administration. Topics include upskilling, merit-based recruitment, professional development, and strategies for creating a diverse and capable workforce. This session will emphasize the fundamentals and the implications of key technologies and participants will explore ways to develop a culture of continuous learning and innovation in the public sector and will address challenges like digital divides, access to ICT, and strategies for leveraging technology to create more responsive and inclusive public services.

Guiding Questions:

- What are the key skills and competencies that will be most critical for the next generation of public servants in the Arab region to meet the evolving demands of public administration?
- How can Arab governments develop and implement effective upskilling programs to ensure that public servants are equipped with the necessary skills for the future?
- How can Arab governments adopt and enforce merit-based recruitment systems to attract the best talent in public administration? What strategies can be employed to retain skilled public servants in the face of competition from the private sector?
- How can governments foster a culture of innovation and problem-solving within public institutions, encouraging public servants to take initiatives and improve service delivery? What are some examples of innovative practices in public administration that have been driven by a new generation of public servants, either in the Arab region or globally?
- What strategies can be implemented to alleviate concerns of public servants regarding job displacement and the perceived threat of AI, while fostering a culture of digital transformation?
- What steps can be taken to implement e-governance initiatives across the Arab region to enhance public service accessibility and efficiency?
- Which emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, blockchain, and IoT, show the greatest potential for transforming public administration in the Arab world, and how can they be successfully integrated?

- How can governments address the digital divide, particularly for marginalized groups like women, the elderly, and low-income populations, to improve access to digital public services?
- What challenges do public sector organizations encounter when shifting from traditional administrative methods to digital platforms?
- How can governments mitigate cybersecurity risks while expanding their digital services?
- In what ways can public administrations balance innovation with regulatory standards to ensure that new technologies are applied ethically and inclusively?
- How can public-private partnerships be leveraged to accelerate digital transformation in governance, especially in countries with limited ICT infrastructure?
- What are some successful case studies of digital transformation in public administration from other regions that could serve as models for Arab countries?

Chair: Tamer Qarmout, Professor Doha Institute.

Speakers:

1. Abe Fetahi, Ex-Meta, Investor, Advisor, Technology
2. Art Alishani, Independent expert, Technology
3. Xavier Sisternas, OECD/SIGMA Senior Policy Adviser, Country Manager for Jordan and Palestine
4. Sabrina Bandera, Italian School of PA

12:30 – 13:15

Modernizing Public Administration with AI: Practical and responsible AI solutions for today's diverse regional challenges

Arta Statovci, AI Lead & Board Member at LEAD Network (UK); Government AI Strategy Advisor & AI Trainer (GIZ).

13:15 - 14:45

Lunch

14:45 - 16:15

Session 7: Public policy making and culture.

Policy Coherence and Public Policy: Shifting Mindsets for Sustainable Development

Effective public administration requires coherent policies that align with sustainable development goals. This session will examine how to foster policy coherence across government levels and sectors, highlighting the need to break down silos and adopt an integrated approach to policy-making. Participants will discuss ways to build capacities and change mindsets within public institutions to promote a holistic and forward-looking policy agenda.

Guiding questions:

- What are the main challenges faced by Arab governments in achieving policy coherence across different sectors and levels of government, especially in the context of sustainable development?
- What specific capacities are needed within public institutions to ensure they can develop and implement coherent policies? How can these capacities be built and sustained in the Arab region?
- How can we engage public servants and leaders to adopt a mindset that prioritizes policy coherence for sustainable development, and what training or incentives would be effective?
- How can we effectively break down institutional silos and promote collaboration between different government entities and sectors to ensure coherent public policies aligned with the SDGs?
- What successful examples of cross-sectoral coordination for policy-making can be shared from the Arab region (or globally), and how can these be replicated?
- How can regional cooperation among Arab countries be strengthened to promote policy coherence in addressing transboundary challenges (climate change, migration, or water management)?

Chair: Bachir Isse, Director, Public Administration School (Federal Republic of Somalia)

Speakers:

1. Betania Lemos, President, National School of Public Administration, Brazil.
2. Bagrat Tunyan, OECD/SIGMA Senior Policy Adviser, Team Leader for Strategic Planning and Policy Development
3. Bardhyl Dobra, Deputy Minister of Interior and Public Administration, The Republic of Kosovo.
4. Laila El Baradei, Professor, American University of Cairo

16:15 - 16:30

Coffee Break

16:30 – 17:00

Closing Remarks and Forum Conclusions

- Youness Abouyoub, Chief, Governance & State-Building. UNESCWA
- Karam Karam , Regional advisor, Institutional Development and public administration UNESCWA