

**UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE DAY**

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INTRODUCTION:

The United Nations is the world's platform to build understanding between nations, find ways to cooperate, and launch coordinated action on problems that transcend borders, While many people read the headlines coming out of the UN Security Council, the organization is also active around the world, heading into crises to help the world's most vulnerable people, promoting sustainable development, protecting human rights, and advancing peace.

According to the founders of the UN, "The UN does what no country can do alone. ...In an interconnected world, we all have a stake in ensuring human dignity for every person."

The United Nations was established by virtue of the UN Charter, and according Article 1,

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

Public administration is the cornerstone of governments' work- plays an essential and critical role in improving people's lives. Reinventing public administration is a positive and necessary way forward. Without public administration modernization and transformation to adapt to today's needs, realizing a better future for all will be impossible. Where capable administrations are lacking, governments are incapacitated; and where governments are incapacitated, sustainable development falls short.

Speaking of the concept of Governments, there are various types of it in the world, predominantly being Democracy, Monarchy, Communism, etc. However, irrespective of the type of government prevailing in any particular country, the main contribution towards the success of any government highly depends on the Public Servants across the world, since they are the ones who are involved in the frontline of the day-to-day welfare of the common public, from the grass-root level.

International days and weeks are occasions to educate the public on issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity. The existence of international days predates the establishment of the United Nations, but the UN has embraced them as a powerful advocacy tool. We also mark other UN observances.

The origin of the United Nations Public Service Day goes back to December 2nd, 2002, the day on which the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 57/277 and recognised the need to designate a day to specially honour the people engaged in Public service across the world, like healthcare workers, essential supplies' distributors, policemen, etc.; and to value and spread awareness about public service in the global community.

Since then, every year, the 23rd day of June is observed as the United Nations Public Service Day; a day to honour people engaged in public service around the world. This year, on 23rd day of June 2021, it assumes even more significance amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as people in public service have been endangering their own lives, in countries across the world, to make people's lives easier, during these testing times.

As Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations said:

"Today, as we honour these essential workers and so many more, we must also reflect on how to better protect, recognize and invest in their well-being as we build back better, together. And I say directly to these inspiring public servants: We are all deeply indebted to you for your remarkable acts of service to humankind,"

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

Effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is recognized by SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The

Agenda also recognized that governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the SDGs and ensuring follow-up and review over the coming 15 years, at the national, regional and global levels. One of the first steps governments take to implement the Agenda is often to shape the institutional arrangements for steering the implementation of the SDGs and reviewing progress.

The World Public Sector Report (WPSR) has been published by the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government of UN DESA since 2001. The 2021 edition will focus on national institutional arrangements of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and their effectiveness, and to assess some of the strengths and weaknesses of those arrangements in relation to the performance of key functions of the policy process (for example, monitoring and evaluation). The report will focus on the time dimension of institutional changes, examining how governments have tried different institutional responses and adjusted their institutional systems to better accommodate the requirements of the 2030 Agenda since 2015.

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly:

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/57/543)]

57/277. Public administration and development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 50/225 of 19 April 1996, 53/201 of 15 December 1998 and 56/213 of 21 December 2001 on public administration and development, as well as Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/45 of 20 December 2001,

Stressing the need for capacity-building initiatives aimed at institution building, human resources development, strengthening financial management and harnessing the power of information and technology,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the role of public administration in the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration;
2. Reiterates that efficient, accountable, effective and transparent public administration, at both the national and international levels, has a key role to play in the implementation of internationally agreed goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and in that context stresses the need to strengthen national public sector administrative and managerial capacity-building, in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
3. Decides that 23 June will be designated United Nations Public Service Day, and encourages Member States to organize special events on that day to highlight the contribution of public service in the development process;
4. Expresses its deep appreciation for the generous offer of the Kingdom of Morocco to host the fourth Global Forum, at Marrakesh, in December 2002;

5. Welcomes the substantive support that the Secretariat has provided to the Global Forum, and invites it to extend such support to any future forums of a similar kind that may take place;
6. Reiterates its appreciation for the role that the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance performs in promoting information sharing and exchange of experience and in building the capacities of developing countries to utilize information communication technologies for this purpose, and reiterates that particular emphasis should be given to the exchange of experience related to the role of public administration in the implementation of internationally agreed goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;
7. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, in the manner he deems appropriate, on the implementation of the present resolution.

78th plenary meeting, 20 December 2002.

The UN also started a recognition programme - the UN Public Service Awards (UNPSA) in 2003, to reward the excellent work done by public servants. The United Nations Public Service Awards is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. It rewards the notable contributions made by individuals and/or institutions at international, national and sub-national levels, towards Public Service and welfare of the global community.

PURPOSE OF THE AWARDS

The main purpose of the United Nations Public Service Award is to acknowledge, appreciate, and motivate the contribution made by public servants across countries, to enhance the role, professionalism, image and visibility of the public service as per Economic and Social Council decision 2000/231. It can be translated into the following more specific objectives:

- (a) To reward service to citizens and motivate public servants worldwide
- (b) To collect and disseminate successful practices and experiences in public administration in order to support efforts for improvements in country level public service delivery;
- (c) Through success stories, to counterbalance any negative image of public administration, raise the image and prestige of public servants and revitalize public administration as a noble discipline on which development greatly depends;
- (d) To promote, encourage and facilitate networking among institutions and organizations relevant to public administration and strengthen the networks of the United Nations programme on public administration and development; and
- (e) To enhance professionalism in the public service in rewarding the successful experiences in innovations and excellence in the public service.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

All Public organizations as well as public/private partnerships and organizations are eligible for nomination. In order to level the playing field for nominations received from countries with varying levels of development and income, the following five regions have been established:

- (a) Africa
- (b) Asia and the Pacific
- (c) Europe and North America
- (d) Latin America and the Caribbean
- (e) Western Asia

Over the past years, many renowned individuals and organisations from various countries have been bestowed with this prestigious award, as a recognition for their contribution towards Public Service. In the year 2020 alone, Korea, Portugal, Brazil, Mexico, Bangladesh, Botswana, Spain were some of the countries from which organisations were honoured with the UNPSA awards. India, even though is yet to receive it, is definitely striving towards earning the award in the near future.

The following are the institutions from various respective countries that received the UNPSA Awards for their various initiatives in the year 2020:

<u>COUNTRY NAME</u>	<u>INITIATIVE/SDG</u>	<u>INSTITUTION</u>
Republic of Korea	Seongdong District's HYO Policy	Seongdong District Office
Portugal	ASET - Automatic Social Energy Tariff	Administrative Modernisation Agency and the Directorate-General of Energy and Geology
Brazil	JaboatãoPrepara	Prefeitura Do Jaboatão Dos Guararapes
Mexico	Consejo Nuevo León para la PlaneaciónEstratégica	Consejo Nuevo León para la PlaneaciónEstratégica
Bangladesh	e-Mutation	Ministry Of Land
Botswana	ICT Integration into Teaching and Learning	Ministry of Basic Education
Spain	Justicia Digital: La visión 360° de la Seguridad	Ministerio de Justicia de España

This year, on the 23rd day of June 2021, the UN is held a virtual event to engage public servants from across the world and discuss the stiff challenges the pandemic is throwing at frontline workers and citizens virtually every day. The following were the speakers who took part in the event:

- Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary General, United Nations.
- H.E.Ohood Bint Khalfan Al Roumi, Minister of State for Government Development and Future, United Arab Emirates.
- Predrag Vasic, UNSRC, Symphony Orchestra.
- Emma Inamutila Theofelus, Namibia's Deputy Minister of Information, Communication and Technology, Namibia.
- H.E. Eng. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, the Deputy Director General for Telecommunications Sector, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- Ms. Bernadette Lewis, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation.
- H.E. Nele Leosk, Ambassador-at-Large for Digital Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia.
- Dr. Julia Glidden is General Manager, Global Government Industry, IBM Corporation.

Post the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic throughout the world, the role played by Public Servants across the world has been re-emphasised. In these tough times, when all countries are striving to fight this virus attack, public servants are the ones who are contributing their notable efforts in various key factors, like making essential supplies reach the people, providing access to healthcare and medical goods, creating awareness strata of the society, assisting the common public in general, etc. Therefore, we can say that without the involvement of Civil/Public Servants, the efforts of the respective governments in battling the pandemic would be mostly futile, as people involved in Public Service are the ones who are at the actual frontline, and are the ones who can reach out to all parts of the society and serve as a connecting point between the governments and the common man.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST MILESTONES COVERED BY THE OPERATIONS OF THE UN IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE:

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the first document to detail the fundamental human rights that must be protected. The declaration was proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1948. Security human rights is a key pillar of the UN's work.
2. The annual UN Peacekeeping budget is less than 0.5% of global military spending. The UN currently has more than 100,000 peacekeepers helping keep peace in 14 operations on 4 continents.

3. The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) provides food and assistance to some 91 million people in 83 countries. Additionally, WFP is planning for the future by developing programs to ensure a more stable food environment.
4. The UN and its agencies help over 1 million women a month overcome pregnancy complications. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) works to make motherhood safer, among other responsibilities.
5. The UN and its agencies supply vaccines to 45% of the world's children. For example, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are core partners of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, which has helped reduce polio cases by over 99% since 1988.
6. The UN supports about 67 countries a year with their elections. The UN also uses diplomacy to prevent conflict.
7. The UN assists people displaced by violence, conflict, and persecution. The UN and its agencies provide life-saving help to refugees and forcibly displaced people. Today, there are more than 68.5 million forcibly displaced people.
8. The Paris Agreement on climate change was signed by the largest amount of countries ever in a single day. On Earth Day 2016, 174 world leaders signed the agreement at the UN headquarters in New York. The UN is committed to fighting climate change, and the agreement builds on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
9. The UN brought countries together in 2015 to launch a plan to end poverty, reduce inequalities, and protect the planet by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a common blueprint for countries to reach a world of dignity for all by 2030.
10. A majority of Americans believe in the importance of the UN. According to a bipartisan poll released by the Better World Campaign, 79% of U.S. voters believe the UN is needed today.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE ON PUBLIC SERVICE DAY:

United Nations Public Service Day honours the hundreds of millions of public servants across the globe, who dedicate themselves to ensuring the wellbeing of our communities. As the world continues to face the devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic, their work is more important than ever.

2020's observance highlights digital innovations in public services.

From telecommuting to online teaching to telemedicine, public servants have mobilized digital technologies to ensure the continuation of public services across all sectors despite the challenging and life-threatening circumstances of the pandemic.

Yet, while many governments have been able to move more and more of public services online, others have struggled. Globally, the digital divides persist. Not only do many people lack access to reliable broadband internet, but many others face barriers to accessing digital technology or don't have the skills needed to access and navigate online public services effectively.

As public service delivery becomes increasingly digital, we must ensure that public servants have the necessary skills. We must also ensure that all persons, including persons with disabilities and other groups facing exclusion, are able to access to online services. We will fully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals only when no one is left offline.

As we mark Public Service Day, let us continue to recognize, support and invest in our public servants both on- and off-line. Let our public servants be empowered to serve.

INNOVATING FOR A NEW ERA: LEVERAGING THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR THE FUTURE PUBLIC SERVICE:

The last decade brought about a digital revolution that changed the way we live, work, and govern. Technology and data driven innovations have increased the pace of our daily life, opened up information and elevated civil society voices and changed how we solve problems, design policy and deliver services. In parallel, governments find themselves under resource pressures and increasing public demands, having to do much more, with less. The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic was a force multiplier to these trends, introducing remote work in government, digital service delivery, virtual service teams, and even new portfolios.

Today, every country in the world needs to re-think the structure and operating model of its civil service as we enter the third decade of the 21st century. The next era will see fundamental changes in how public servants, are hired, trained, and retained. We will see more technology being leveraged to make better decisions, monitor performance, and deliver service, and there will be a need for the private sector, and wider society, to play a bigger role in all aspect of creating public value. The future public service needs to be more agile, tech-savvy, data-driven, and human-centric. These are core elements to build future readiness, ensure inclusive policies and responsive services, to reduce inequalities and to raise trust in government.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND PUBLIC SERVANTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

The COVID-19 crisis has affected us all. Every continent, and nearly all countries in the world, have been forced to change the way we live and interact with one another.

While most of the population was trying to adapt to the unexpected new challenges brought on by the pandemic, public servants did not have time to stop. Since day one, they have been on the frontlines, risking their lives to protect us. Today, after more than 22 996 474 cases, 799 387 deaths (as of 21 August 2020), and over 1 billion children impacted by school closures, they are still delivering essential services with dedication and courage.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND PUBLIC SERVANTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

For the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be achieved effective delivery of public services is needed, including in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. If not contained, the pandemic will jeopardize meeting the 2030 deadline, by diverting resources from development efforts to crisis response. The public servant sits at the heart of ensuring effective response to the crisis, whether as a frontline worker in healthcare, or in devising strategies and plans to mitigate its impact. This policy paper outlines nine key roles public servants have been and must continue to play to ensure an effective response to the pandemic: (i) ensuring continuity of public services; (ii) providing service before self: courage and humanness in practice; (iii) quick thinking, creativity and innovation; (iv) information and awareness creation; (v) strategic thinking and planning amidst chaos; (vi) sustaining resilience and building a better effective and more responsive public service; (vii) building and enhancing State legitimacy, government credibility and people's trust; (viii) resource allocation and distributive accountability; and (ix) collaborative and networked leadership. In order to effectively play these roles, a public servant must have a profile characterized by the following: self-sacrifice, trustworthiness, risk-taking, versatility, adaptability, creativity, transparency and accountability, and they must be knowledgeable and skilled, persistent, empathetic, collaborative, and competent in the use of technology all driven by humanness in their personality. The following policy recommendations are made: (i) comprehensive public service capacity development; (ii) institutionalization of early warning, emergency planning, preparedness and quick response in the public service; (iii) networking collaborating, sharing and learning from successful practices and mistakes to build better and more effective public services for future pandemics and crisis; (iv) sustaining development of responsible, responsive, accountable and people-focused leadership in public sector institutions; and (v) providing for financial resources for pandemic and crisis before they happen.

CONCLUSION:

When it comes to recruitment of Public Service workers in the United Nations, it can be noticed that there are no grounds of discrimination among race, nationality, sex, etc. There is no bar for involvement in Public Service across the world.

No individual or nation can consider themselves as self-sufficient when it comes to providing or receiving Public Service. It is inevitable that everyone receives and also provides Public Service at any given time. For example, Government Doctors are considered as the general public, when they are at the receiving end of Public service while seeking guidance from the Police. However, they become Public Service providers when they render medical assistance to policemen. This is when, the roles are interchanged and the police become the receiver of public service. This is why, we can say that the role of public service is interchangeable and also pervasive at all level of the society and hence, no one can claim full-involvement and/or zero-involvement in Public Service.

It is undeniable that all lives are touched by Public Service, either by being in the receiving end, or the providing end. This is why, it is important that each and every individual across the world, along with their families, should acknowledge their inevitable involvement in Public Service and should also actively celebrate the service of Public Servants in the UN, as well as the ones in their own countries. After all, if not for the current generation, the next and upcoming generations can be actively involved in Public Service, and the United Nations, along with all nations have indeed created sufficient opportunities to ensure this.

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