Public administration in the years to come will continue to be the main instrument of the State to define policies, to implement programmes and to ensure that security, safety and quality services are provided to its citizens. It will also be a key factor in enabling countries to accelerate their economic and social development and to meet their development goals.

In order to maintain its relevance and usefulness to Member States in the next decades, the United Nations Programme on Public Administration needs to advise on and provide solutions to crucial issues facing public administrations around the world, especially those relevant for developing countries. It must also deal with challenges internal to the functioning of the economic and social sector of the United Nations.

One challenge for the Programme will be to re-emphasize this important role of public administration and to ensure that the study and practice of public administration are given the proper space within the economic and social sector of the United Nations.

In this very book, it is mentioned that by 1952 public administration began to be considered by the United Nations on a par with economic development and social welfare. Today, unfortunately, there is a danger that the centrality of public administration in development is undervalued in an environment dominated by economists and social scientists. To counter this trend, stronger cooperation with the other divisions within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and with the regional commissions should be developed with a view to better link their analytical work on economic and social policies with the analytical and operational work of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, in particular with its capacity development initiatives.

Empirical research has shown that public administration capacity is crucial for the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs). It is therefore essential for the Programme to maintain its strong focus on building the capacity of governance and public administration systems and institutions.

To this end, the Programme must sharpen its ability to convert its rich analytical products and its vast knowledge base into useful, practical tools for Governments and public administration officials. The policy briefs resulting from the work of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration are an important
step in this direction. They should be supplemented by similar briefs resulting from the work of the Secretariat. The rich collection, documentation and analysis of successful practices should be converted into operational tools to be put at the disposal of Governments and also of UNDP country offices, with which linkages should be strengthened.

In terms of content, the main challenge is to promote the revitalization of public administration and reassert its crucial role in development while capitalizing on the important lessons of the new public management and governance movements. The Programme should thus assist Member States in establishing, developing and strengthening the core institutions, values and practices of public administration.

The protection of the rights of individuals and the provision of a secure and safe environment for human activities are at the core of the function of government and public administration. Particularly in situations of conflict, crisis or natural disaster, public administration should be the anchor for ensuring the continuity of the State and the provision of services. The Programme must develop capacity development tools to help public administration face these challenging circumstances.

The Programme should also maintain its strong presence in the area of accountability and transparency, where it has acquired a solid knowledge base and can thus help Governments and public administration to combine efficiency and effectiveness with a strong commitment to be accountable to their citizens and be open to scrutiny in their operations.

The Programme, during its long history, has always been instrumental in the development of human resources in the public sector. In today’s rapidly changing world, the demands placed upon the public service are growing and constantly changing. A new professionalism, enhanced knowledge and global thinking are required of the human resources operating in the public sector. The Programme has assisted and should continue to assist Member States in developing the public service which a modern State requires now and will require in the future.

But the important message that the Programme should disseminate is that public administration today cannot function in a traditional way. The push by the new public management movement to make administration more efficient, less costly, more flexible and results-oriented should be incorporated into systems and methods of work of modern public administration.
The same administration must operate within the context of a wider governance paradigm and learn to interface with the private sector and civil society in the setting of goals, in the delivery of services and in accounting for its actions.

The Programme has a crucial role in helping Governments incorporate these principles into the institutions, organizations and practices of public administration. It has done so by providing the introduction of information and communications technologies in public administration and in focusing on e-government policies and practices. The leading role of the Programme in this field should be further strengthened by enriching its knowledge base and converting it into practical advice for policymakers and practitioners.

Similarly, the groundbreaking analytical work in the area of “civic engagement” should be further developed and converted into practical tools for Governments to engage civil society in policy development, budgeting, service delivery and accountability.

Today's advancements in the economy and in society are spearheaded by scientific and technological innovations. Public administrations must not be left behind; they must constantly strive to reinvent and transform themselves through innovation. The Programme has pioneered analytical work to understand the process of innovation in public administration and has set in motion a global innovation movement in public administration, exemplified by the United Nations Public Service Awards. Member States and individual government agencies count on the Programme as a key hub for the identification, documentation and sharing of innovation. That role should be not only maintained but enhanced as the changes in today’s world become ever more rapid.

One of the other characteristics of today's world is the growth of relationships and networks, as no one actor can master the exponential growth of knowledge or can address the multiplicity of challenges. The strength of the Programme in the future will lie not only in its own knowledge, capacity and accomplishments, but also in the ability to bring together those of many other organizations whose objectives and roles are synchronized with its own. The United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) has the potential to grow even wider and stronger and to serve as a platform, not only for sharing knowledge but also for capacity development.

Throughout the years, the Programme has built a vast and strong constituency among government agencies, local entities, public administration schools and institutes, universities, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organi-
This constituency expects the United Nations to continue providing global leadership in the field of public administration and development. The Programme should provide the intellectual and operational contribution to this constituency, as expected from it.

In looking towards the future and in plotting the direction of its work, the United Nations Programme should never lose sight of the underlying objective of its mandate, namely, that of placing public administration at the service of economic and social development, at the service of the poor and disenfranchised. The development of knowledge, systems and technologies per se has no value if they do not ultimately help to improve the living conditions of the people whom public administrations serve.