Director’s Report

January – August 2018
UNDP sees capacity development as the process through which individuals, organisations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. An essential component is transformation, and no other country has achieved the huge amount of transformation in the little time as Singapore. The ‘Singapore Story’ inspired the establishment of the Centre in 2012, and still has much to teach today’s developing countries aspiring to emulate its success.

The Centre, jointly funded by UNDP and Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has aimed over its six years to advance development objectives by doing three things:

i) Informing public service around the world about “what works”;

ii) Promoting progress to that end; and

iii) Advising countries on how to emulate success in delivering development.

Since 2012, one head of state, one vice-president, various prime ministers, many ministers and innumerable senior officials from around the world have visited the Centre, received evidence-based advice, and departed hopefully with a new or renewed interest in public service reform. Our many publications on topics including foresight, public service motivation, leadership and innovation are increasingly reflected in development thinking, not least the latest UNDP Strategic Plan.

Our work has flourished through international partnerships, such as with the Astana Civil Service Hub, and through friendships with big-hearted Singaporeans, in public service and beyond whom kindly contributed their help and good humour. Public service shall, and always will, remain the cornerstone of development for all nations.

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The UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence promotes better appreciation of the key role public service plays in achieving development goals.

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The Global Centre for Public Service Excellence

The UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence (GCPSE) was established in 2012 to act as *UNDP’s catalyst for new thinking, strategy and action in the area of public service; promoting innovation, evidence, and collaboration*. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the importance of public service for development, and the implementation of the SDGs depends primarily on an effective public administration.

GCPSE acts as a catalyst for new thinking, strategy and practice in the area of public service and enhances the quality of UNDP’s activities in more than 170 offices in developing countries, regional centres and headquarters by:

i. Functioning as a hub for evidence and knowledge; and

ii. Acting as a convening and collaboration hub bringing together scholars, practitioners and policymakers to review evidence and best practice from around the world.

In the first phase of work (2012-2015), GCPSE identified four relatively neglected but critical themes for development – motivation, political leadership, foresight, and public service innovation. Research then also confirmed that public service is key to development. Yet how or why an impartial, ethical, fair and meritocratic public service comes about and how it can be promoted and fostered remains perhaps the biggest puzzle holding up international development.
Therefore, GCPSE aimed to tackle and strengthen the approach to make a tangible difference by helping UNDP and its partner countries during the Second Phase (2015-2018) to:

i. **Build** citizens’ trust in public service as fair and impartial.
ii. **Foster** better appreciation of the key roles that the public service plays in every developing country for achieving development.
iii. **Act** as a source for new thinking and action on public service excellence, and South-South collaboration.
iv. **Question** assumptions where the evidence suggests there is a case for re-examining development practice; and
v. **Contribute** to global research priorities on improving public service.

Over the past six years, GCPSE has built up five themes emerging from our experiences. These guide the Centre’s work by providing its framework and ‘theory of change’ for effective public service to deliver the SDGs:

- Political/administrative leadership,
- Public service motivation,
- Foresight / adaptive governance,
- Public service innovation, and
- Digital government.

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**GCPSE’s Core Message**

Public sector reform requires A.I.M.M. (Adaptive - Impartial - Merit-based - Motivated) for Excellence: Public service is impartial (treats all equitably and fairly, essential for building citizens’ trust in government); based on ability; and promotes continuous learning and incremental change.
1. Director’s Message

The Global Centre for Public Service Excellence (GCPSE) has come to the end of the second phase (2015 – 2018), and with it the end of the project. Some of our key events:

- Digital conference in Samoa
- Training courses
- Publications (e.g. Public Service 2030)
- Capstone conference
- Welcoming 65-person strong Nigerian delegation
- Peer-to-Peer learning workshops

We strengthened our collaboration with new and existing partner institutions. In 2018, we again hosted a high-profile training programme on the Sustainable Development Goals in cooperation with the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP), partnered with the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in organising the seminar on Digital Economy, and organised a regional conference\(^1\) on digital transformation together with the Government of Samoa and the UNDP Country Office among many others.

GCPSE further consolidated the close working partnership which we enjoy with the Astana Hub of Civil Service. ACSH partnered with us on the Public Service Motivation (PSM), and will be taking over the global study on PSM moving forward from September

2018. In addition, together with ACSH, we are also finalising the second annual joint publication on trends in civil service reform around the world.

We featured the foresight work and key partnerships of the GCPSE at an official programm connected to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) at the United Nations in New York. The SDGs Learning, Training and Practice event hosted by UNITAR and UNDESA featured our half-day training course on foresight titled “Advancing the 2030 Agenda in a Context of Uncertainty - The use of Strategic Foresight for Adaptive and Future-Ready SDG Strategies”. It was jointly organised with the OECD, UNESCO, the School of International Futures (SOIF), and the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) of the South African Government.

In June 2018, we partnered with the Inter Press Service (IPS), United Nations Foundation, and Eco-Business to organise a two and a half-day workshop in Singapore. The workshop focused on SDGs and the media’s role in reporting on related issues, especially the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which are undertaken by all UN member countries to review progress of the SDG. It is noteworthy that Singapore is presenting its VNR this year at the HLPF in New York.

The Centre published its updated toolkit on the use of foresight in support of the 2030 Agenda. The new manual summarises the learning of the GCPSE from over a dozen foresightXchange events held jointly with UNDP Country Offices, their
Government Counterparts and Regional Hubs and proposes the *Empowered Futures* approach to foresight.

Our competencies on Public Service Motivation are also noticed by external partners, such as the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). In March 2018, we were invited to conduct training sessions on New Public Passion as part of their Afghanistan Fellowship Programme 2018.

We strive to be the catalyst on public service issues. This year, we sharpened our focus on the impact of disruptive technologies on the public service by publishing a think piece on the Politics of Big Data, a discussion paper on Policy Frameworks for the Digital Economy, and by organising conferences on digital government/digital economy; we have partnered the Government Technology Agency of Singapore (GovTECH) and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to organise an executive development course for senior government officials on “Digital Government for Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies – the Singapore Experience” in April 2018.

The Centre’s mission remains essential for UNDP to achieve its mandate to help partner countries in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

(Max Everest-Phillips)

*Director*

*UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence*
Highlights in 2018

Influencing

At the request of the UNDP CO, we hosted a delegation led by the Winifred Ekanem Oyo-IITA, Nigerian Head of Civil Service who is leading a programme of major reform.

Other senior officials who visited or took part in GCPSE programmes:
- Vice Minister, Secretariat of Social Investment and Development, Honduras;
- Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Development, Palestinian National Authority;
- Secretary of State, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Cambodia;
- Deputy Secretary-General, ASEAN Political Security Community, Vietnam;
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism, Brunei Darussalam;
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Solomon Islands;
- Chief of Staff, Republic of Palau Government; and
- Deputy Permanent Secretary, Personnel Management Office, Gambia.

Featured senior Singaporean leaders who spoke at our events:
- Mr. Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Environment and Water Resources, Singapore (SCP-GCPSE Leadership Programme);
- Dr. Tan Wu Meng, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore (SCP-GCPSE Leadership Programme);
- Ms. Lim Soo Hoon, Advisor to Ministry of Finance, Singapore (SCP-GCPSE Public Service 2030); and
- Ms. Aileen Chia, Deputy Chief Executive and Director-General (Telecoms & Post), Infocomm Media Development Authority (Seminar on Digital Economy).
**Advising**  
Supported the Government of Samoa and the UNDP Multi-Country Office in the conceptualisation, design and facilitation of a regional conference on digital transformation for the Pacific and a national workshop for Samoa. GCPSE sourced speakers from across all sectors and ascertain the success of the event through high quality content.

Advised UNDP Kyrgyzstan on conceptualising a foresight engagement with the Centre of Government. Intended entry points are the ongoing public sector reform with particular focus on delivery, innovation and digital transformation.

**Themes**  
Presented our research at international conferences and workshops outside Singapore:

- The use of Strategic Foresight for Adaptive and Future-Ready SDG Strategies at the High Level Political Forum (New York, USA)
- International Forum: Peer Learning & Thinking and Working Politically (Paris, France)
- Pacific Region Conference: Digital Government and the Digital Economy (Samoa)

**Partnering**  
Implemented and co-hosted three training programmes with the Singapore Cooperation Programme:

- Middle East Future Public Service Leader (26 February – 2 March), fully funded by the Government of Singapore;
- Public Service 2030 & Beyond (9 – 13 April), fully funded by the Government of Singapore; and
- Transformational Leadership for Delivering the 2030 Agenda (21 - 25 May), jointly funded.

Partnered with the Inter Press Service, United Nations Foundation, and Eco-Business to organise a 2 ½ day workshop on “SDG Media Training” in Singapore (27 – 29 June). The workshop focused on the SDGs and the media’s role in reporting on related issues, especially the Voluntary national Reviews. The workshop convene key UN representatives and leaders from government, business and civic
society to share their perspectives about the challenges and opportunities in achieving the SDGs.

**Functioned as co-secretariat** with OECD-DAC of the Effective Institutions Platform (EIP), a coalition of over 65 member governments, donors, academic bodies and NGOs that support peer-to-peer learning on the effectiveness of public sector institutions.

**Strong and multi-faceted collaboration** with the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana was further enhanced. The GCPSE Director is member of the editorial board of the ACSH Journal.

**Sharing**

**Hosted** global thought leaders on development and governance:

At our Regional Conference on Digital Pacific Samoa:
- Honourable Afamasaga Lepuiai Rico Tupai, Minister of Communications and IT (Samoa)
- Mr. Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director of UNDP (Asia and Pacific)
- Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, Director (CSD Columbia and UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network)
- Mr. Hannes Astok, Director (e-Governance Academy of Estonia)
- Ms. Mariana Dahan, CEO and founder (World Identity Network)
- Mr. Johan Berghoef, Secretariat of the Pacific Community

At our GCPSE Capstone Conference:
- Prof. Shyaka Anastase, CEO Rwanda Governance Board and Board Member UNDP GCPSE
- Mr. Karma Tshiteem, Chairman Royal Civil Service Commission, Bhutan
- Ms. Blessings Chilabade, Secretary for Human Resource Development & Management, Malawi
**Funding**
Secured financial support from:

- DFID (for EIP activities in collaboration with the National School of Government International – NSGI)
- Government of Singapore (Technical Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

**Evidence**
Produced and disseminated knowledge products, including:

**FORESIGHT**
- Foresight Manual
  – Empowered Futures for the 2030 Agenda

**PUBLIC SERVICE INNOVATION**
- The Politics of Big Data
  – a Framework for Public Administration
- Framing Policies for the Digital Economy
  – Towards Policy Frameworks in Asia-Pacific
- Digital Pacific 2018 – Conference Report

**EVIDENCE**
- Publication on SDG and Public Service: “Public Service 2030”
- GCPSE continued to publish a weekly ‘Raffles Review’ (RR) reviewing recent academic or practitioner papers. The final issue (#104) was published in July 2018. The RR has approx. 1400 email subscribers, plus members of the UNDP Governance and Peacebuilding network)
3a. Key Events

Digital Pacific Conference

The Digital Pacific Regional Conference was hosted by UNDP and the Government of Samoa (7 & 8 June). Over 200 international expert-practitioners, academics, and private sector and NGO representatives from 14 countries (e.g. Samoa, Australia, Caribbean, Estonia, and New Zealand) came together to advance digital transformation.

Opening the event, the Minister of Communications and IT of Samoa, Honourable Afamasaga Lepui'ai Rico Tupai made his high expectations of digital transformation clear and emphasised the need for partnerships:

“Thanks to digitalisation, Samoa will never be as remote as it once was. [...] Only together will the private and public sectors build the digital Pacific.”
The sessions inspired the audience with relevant digital transformation experiences delivered by practitioner-experts from countries that are known to be pioneers, such as Estonia, New Zealand as well as the Caribbean region (to include a SIDS perspective). Five panels covered key aspects of digital transformation, such as digital identity, digital economy, digital government, skills & education as well as cyber security.

Increased broadband connectivity (new sub-sea cables) are beginning to level the playing field for these island economies — which otherwise find themselves separated from the economic growth hubs by a vast expanse of Pacific Ocean. Distance hardly matters in the digital world of bits and bytes.

Small in land size, many of the Pacific island states cover vast ocean territories (Kiribati is the size of India) and some are extremely tiny (Nauru being the third smallest in the world with 11,347 residents in a 21 square-kilometre area). Digital technology can help bridge many efficiency or accessibility gaps in public services, offers new livelihood opportunities and increases connectivity with the large diaspora in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.
Paramount to the success of digital Government is to focus all transformation efforts on the needs of citizens and businesses. With this in mind, Governments must work in an iterative manner, making simple but significant steps towards highly convenient and satisfactory public services.

Although countries like Samoa now have access to high-speed connectivity, reliable and more affordable broadband internet, providing such connectivity in all islands through infrastructure investments is the first layer of digitalization and requires regional collaboration. The opportunity is immense if the potential is leveraged through cooperation and coordination among the relevant actors of governments.

Seminar on Digital Economy

Together with the Nanyang Centre for Public Administration (NCPA) from Nanyang Technological University, GCPSE organised a seminar: Digital Economy on 28 February 2018 in Singapore. The conference aimed to provide a forum for participants to understand the challenges faced in developing new regulatory and policy frameworks to unlock the potential of the digital economy to contribute to sustainable development.

Over 200 participants – Government officials, development practitioners, academics, private sector and NGO representatives – came together to discuss and share their thoughts on digital economy. In their opening
addresses, Mr Max Everest-Phillips (Director, GCPSE) and Prof Liu Hong (Chair of the School of Social Sciences and Director of NCPA, NTU) both emphasized on the development and importance of digital economy. They said the world is changing now and technology plays an important role for the global economy. It is important for the policy makers to better understand this trend as digital technologies transform the economy.

Participants of the conference debated whether Government is ready to embrace emerging technologies, where they (technology) bring opportunities and where the challenges lie. Dr. Peter Lovelock shared his paper “Framing Policies for the Digital Economy – Towards Policy Frameworks in Asia Pacific”, highlighting
challenges for policy makers. He shared on approaches adopted and led by EU, Singapore, China, USA, Hong Kong and Japan, compared them to the countries (Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam) in his case studies. Other speakers include Ms. Annabella Ng from Grab Singapore, who shared the perspectives from the private sector on shared economy enabled through digitalisation; and Ms. Aileen Chia from Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) Singapore who touched on regulatory and governance issues in transforming a nation towards a digital society.

3b. The Empowered Futures Initiative (EFI)

GCPSE had identified, explored and tested several the application of foresight for public service organisations in developing countries. It was discovered that the more ‘traditional’ forecasting, as practised by more advanced countries, is resource intensive and therefore best organised and accessed as a ‘global public good’.

EFI Event at the High-Level Political Forum

The Division for Sustainable Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) organised the SDGs Learning, Training & Practice - a series of capacity building and knowledge workshops, featuring speakers and
experts from academia and other sectors on crucial topics related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Partnering the Centre for Public Service Innovation (South Africa), OECD, the School of International Futures and UNESCO, GCPSE hosted the session “Advancing the 2030 Agenda in a Context of Uncertainty - The use of Strategic Foresight for Adaptive and Future-Ready SDG Strategies” on 13 July, at the High Level Political Forum in New York.

The event saw roughly 45 participants joined in person, and was transmitted live and available as a recording². Participants were particularly interested in the integration of foresight approaches and futures principles in a: (1) planning toolkit for African planning bodies; and (2) pre- and post-MAPS mission engagements (to engage a wide range of stakeholders in visioning and in exploring more thoroughly both the potential opportunities and risks). Doubts were raised about the cognitive biases in such processes and the ability of

attributing / measuring impact of foresight engagements, but positive examples such as the PAPEP prospective policy scenario project provided a useful reference.

Strategic foresight was seen as an important tool for planning, with UNESCO scaling up (with a network of academic chairs on futures-literacy being set up around the globe) and expressing interest to work with our partner UNDP Africa on a region-wide project effort. UNDOCO was also keen to work more on foresight; this was signalled by the inclusion of a session in the RC induction training which happened during the same week of HLPF, conducted via VC by former GCPSE Advisor Peter van de Pol.

### 3c. Public Service Motivation (PSM)

Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depends on effective public service, and public services.

GCPSE sought to better understand the motivation civil servants of in developing countries. Building on pilot studies (in collaboration with ACSH and UNDP Pakistan), GCPSE refined its methodology and partners with a new set of Government partners (Bhutan, Moldova, Palestine, Seychelles, Kiribati, Kenya, Laos, Vietnam and Afghanistan) to survey civil servants about their intrinsic motivation.

In mid-2018, GCPSE successfully completed the studies for Bhutan, Moldova, and Seychelles. Some of the insights gathered from the studies show that although a high PSM scores signified higher level of prosocial behaviour and propensity to serve the public good, it does not necessary correlates to high level of engagement.
In the case of Bhutan, the public servants from the Gross National Happiness Commission (GHNC) displayed a mean PSM score of 5.78 out of 7, but had a low level of work engagement score (1.81 out of 4). The finding was similar to that of the Department of Public Administration (DPA), Seychelles. DPA Seychelles scored a mean PSM score of 5.67 out of 7, but also showed a low level of work engagement score (1.75 out of 4). This discrepancy allowed us to investigate further into the managerial practices, empowerment, and work environment etc.

Early findings from the study indicated that the idea of a PSM is much more complex than just measuring intrinsic motivation; there is a need to further understand the various kinds of motivation, and this was supplemented in the study through the works of Ryan and Deci (2000) on self-determination theory. Motivation is seen as a scale (from internal to external regulation), with the type dependent on the extent to which each of the three needs is satisfied.
• **Intrinsic motivation**
  – activity is pursued because it brings happiness, satisfaction and pleasure.

• **Identified motivation**
  – activity is pursued because an individual identifies with the values of the activity and sees its personal importance to self.

• **Instrumental motivation**
  – activity is pursued because of a practical reason or benefit, such as earning a salary.

• **Introjected motivation**
  – activity is pursued because it helps maintain self-worth and self-esteem, or to avoid external judgement.

• **External motivation**
  – activity is pursued to avoid external punishment or earn an external reward.
The ambition of GCPSE is to expand this study more broadly throughout the developing world in order to finally plug the crucial research gap in evidence, and more importantly, to ensure that ‘best practice’ research in this field properly takes into account the developing country context on what motivates civil servants. Moving forward, GCPSE will be working with the Astana Hub for Civil Service to take on this global study from end August 2018 onwards.

3d. The Effective Institutions Platform

The SPARKS! Grants

In early 2017 the Effective Institutions Platform (EIP) made a call for proposals to the EIP membership to apply for SPARKS! Grants that are made available for innovative new initiatives employing the EIP Peer-to-Peer Learning approaches. Seven applications were submitted by government agencies and NGOs with topics ranging from public service, parliament, climate finance, fiscal decentralization, economic governance, climate finance, and strengthening of public agencies covering countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and global programmes.

The grantees used the USD 20,000 grant (each) to initiate the establishment of peer to peer learning alliance (P2P-LA) in the second half of 2017. Particularly in the Climate Finance Integrity and Anti-Corruption Peer Learning Initiative, the engagement meeting conducted in December 2017 saw six international peers forming the Climate Finance Integrity Learning Alliance (CFI-LA). The German International Development Corporation (GIZ) also took interest in driving the CFI-LA forward with funding support for continued engagement of the peers on climate finance integrity related work.
The lessons learnt and reflection from the implementation of the EIP Peer-to-Peer Learning Guide in the 3 SPARKS!-funded Peer-to-Peer Learning initiatives will be used to validate and revise the Guide. In this way, the EIP aims to contribute to a peer-to-peer learning that ensure changes and reforms in public institutions are to happen. The revision of the Guide will take place in 2018.

**EIP Advisory Group**

The EIP Advisory Group (AG) has met virtually in February and face-to-face but informally (10 July, New York) on the sidelines of the High-Level Political Forum. Given that the last Annual Meeting was held in late 2016, the Joint Secretariat has been trying to keep the AG and the membership informed about progress, particularly on fundraising for the EIP.
While the USAID funding for UNDP’s role came to an end in April 2018, Sida (Sweden) has made a grant to OECD for 2018 for the production of a visioning paper, secretariat functions and an Annual Meeting. The visioning paper is meant to inform a relaunch of the EIP with a stronger focus (the areas of public sector reform that are most relevant to its members) and leveraging its core competencies on peer-to-peer learning and multi-stakeholder dialogues.

The Centre is handing over its role in the joint secretariat to colleagues at the Core Government Functions team at UNDP HQ for an interim period during which funding for the Secretariat function needs to be mobilised.

**Learning more about Peer Learning**

At the same time, UNDP received a grant from the National School of Government International (NSGI) of the UK for the organisation of a workshop on Peer Learning and the production of a joint discussion paper on the same topic. This workshop was held in February 2018, bringing together peer learning practitioners, Government representatives, donors and scholars to share their approaches and experiences. In its role as a Co-Secretariat, the Centre co-designed the programme with NSGI and OECD and organised the travel of speakers. It also produced the discussion paper (post event) with the help of an independent consultant and completed a thorough editing process with significant support from partners.

The EIP also envisions that more peer-to-peer learning initiatives will take place and more public institutions will adopt this peer-to-peer learning approach in South-South Cooperation and in implementing the 2030 Development Agenda. To document the trends on P2P partnerships and learning, reflect on the relationship between the new development agenda and P2P engagements, and add in-depth analysis on how peer to peer partnerships and learning can
contribute to the success of the 2030 Agenda, both the EIP and National School of Government International (NSGI) jointly wrote a paper on “The Future of Peer-to-Peer Learning & Partnerships in the New Development Agenda”. The paper, serving as a practical contribution to the debate and future policy of P2P learning and partnerships, will be launched in the third quarter of 2018.

3e. GCPSE Evaluation

As part of the evaluation for GCPSE’s first two phases (from 2012 – 2018), UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme (BPPS) contracted an external consultant to conduct an evaluation of GCPSE. The review was to look at the work to-date of the centre and to provide specific recommendations with regard to any adjustments that may be required to ensure a viable outcome for the Centre in the future. In addition, the review was to look at the strategic role of GCPSE within UNDPs programming architecture and its relevance to the new Strategic Plan (2018-22).

The overall summary of the evaluation results were positive, with UNDP Principal Pedro Conceicao expressing his satisfaction and gratitude to the team for the performance. However, the final decision made by headquarters was to close the project and start a new collaboration between UNDP and the Government of Singapore; this was expressed by the Singapore Permanent Representative to the UN.

It is uncertain what modality and form the new collaboration will take place as negotiations are on-going. The official closure of the centre will be on the 31 August 2018.
4. Capstone Conference

GCPSE is one of six Global Policy Centres of the UNDP set up 6 years ago in collaboration with the Government of Singapore. As a global leader in public service excellence – the driving force behind Singapore’s rapid economic and social successes – the city-state attracts the attention from many Governments wanting to learn more about its transformation journey. Its achievements provide inspiration for others seeking to build a professional public service with integrity, diversity and a focus on clients and results.

As part of its work, the Centre has been promoting an impartial and meritocratic public service able to build citizens’ trust by implementing incremental reform through continuous learning. Through its evidence building activities the centre has produced a series of publications (http://bit.ly/GCPSEevidence) building a body of knowledge on themes, such as public service innovation, strategic foresight, motivation of public officials and public sector reform.
The GCPSE has convened numerous events (http://bit.ly/eventsGCPSE) bringing together officials, leaders, policy-makers and experts together to debate and collaborate on addressing the public challenges of the day. A wide range of partnerships and collaborations with academic, public and private sector institutions have resulted in joint initiatives in Singapore and at country-level, covering a wide range of developing country contexts on all continents.

2018 marks the completion of the second phase of the project and it’s a milestone in the partnership between UNDP and the Government of Singapore worth celebrating. The capstone conference (16 & 17 August) will convene passionate and like-minded practitioners and advocates of public service excellence to review the key insights of the last 6 years. The conference will feature GCPSE colleagues and distinguished partners from various institutions and countries sharing insights on public service excellence.

**Publication: Public Service 2030**

As part of the Capstone event, GCPSE will be launching our celebratory publication – Public Service 2030 – featuring stories of public service excellence on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The aim of the publication is to distil key learning points or principles of effective, efficient and equitable public service, through human interest stories. The publication will show how lives of ordinary people can be dramatically improved by making progress in building an honest, merit-based, responsive, accountable, innovative, motivated and well-led public service.
It is our firm belief that public service excellence is a key enabler for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on the SDGs. Its role as an accelerator reaches well beyond SDG 16 and the specific target on effective institutions (16.6). Not only will the public service need to acknowledge and respond to the complexity of the development agenda, but also deliver more, deliver better and deliver faster, often with reduced resources and a diminished public image. In this context, we need to celebrate the achievements of public service and envision a 2030 in which we would have achieved the objectives of the agenda.
“While it is true that the achievement of Agenda 2030 needs new partnerships between the public service and private sector and civil society organizations in what can be called a “whole of society” approach, it is equally true that the role of public services across the world will remain pivotal.

Indeed, as Singapore’s experience over more than five decades has illustrated and continues to demonstrate, there is no substitute for good governance embodied in public service vision, foresight and competence if major national development objectives are to be achieved.

The Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals cannot be achieved if such national development objectives remain unachieved. In the 21st century this will require no less than both public service excellence and the ‘whole of government’ approach which Singapore practices.

Singapore’s greatest contribution to Agenda 2030, therefore, remains sharing its experiences in the public service area globally through a strategically focused UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence which it helped seed and needs to continue to support.”

Kamal Malhotra
UN Resident Coordinator, and
UNDP Resident Representative
Viet Nam
GCPSE Service Lines

- **Country-level Engagements**
  Countries seeking the Centre’s support in 2018 include Cabo Verde, Colombia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Samoa and Timor-Leste.

- **Public Service Innovation**
  This theme remains one of GCPSE’s most promising areas which has been consistently in high demand (topics ranging from service design methods to Government delivery units). The Centre’s activities on the theme of Public Service Innovation have covered a wide range of topics: social innovation, design thinking, collaboration, citizen engagement and digital technologies. In 2016, GCPSE received private sector funding for a study on the digital economy and in 2017 it focused in on emerging technologies by convening an international conference on Disruptive Technologies and the Public Service. The latter was GCPSE’s first private sector-sponsored event and demonstrated the potential for future partnerships which it has begun to explore.

GCPSE will consider the implications, opportunities and challenges associated with emerging (and often disruptive) technologies for the public service. Effects from the changing operating environment and demand will be tangible at the organizational level (procedures, structures, culture, etc.) and at individual level (skills, knowledge, competencies, etc.). Particular attention will be paid to the combinatorial effects of different technologies (e.g. AI and Big Data or Blockchain and IoT) as well as their impact on the
sustainable and inclusive development agenda with its principle of “leaving no-one behind”.

- **Peer Learning among Practitioners - from Research to Action (within UNDP and beyond)**
  In its role as the Co-Secretariat for the Effective Institution Platform (EIP), GCPSE is organising the EIP Annual Meeting and thematic workshops focused on Peer Learning, and “Thinking and Working Politically”. The Swedish development agency SIDA is joining as a Co-Chair, replacing the current donor USAID. Peer learning platform will link research and programming and provide useful perspective on knowing and learning for practitioners across the regions. The Swedish development agency SIDA is joining as a Co-Chair, replacing the current donor USAID. There is potential to develop the EIP into a forum for strengthening OECD/UNDP ties on public service and the SDGs, with donors like SIDA funding activities on specific learning alliances.

- **Governance and Anti-Corruption**
  Given that the Centre and Singapore are already hosting the Anti-Corruption programme of UNDP with significant programme funding from Australian DFAT, GCPSE will also remain a focal point for possible linkages between the anti-corruption agenda for transparent & accountable institutions and public service excellence. We expect the anti-corruption team to augment its capacities on this topic and infuse expertise into the work of the Centre, linking the agenda of the team more closely to the public sector institutions agenda captured in SDG 16.
Acknowledgements

The Director is deeply grateful for the continuing excellent guidance and enthusiastic support that the Centre receives from the Government of Singapore, from UNDP colleagues in New York, Kuala Lumpur and Country Offices, Regional Centres, and other Global Policy Centres; from our Independent board member from Rwanda, and from all the current and former employees, advisors, consultants, interns and volunteers who have all contributed enormously to the success of the Centre to date.