



# **AIDE MEMOIRE**

## **THE 2008 WORKSHOP ON BUILDING GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT CAPACITY FOR TRANSPARENT LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

**Beijing, China,  
8-9 December 2008**

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### **PURPOSE & SPONSORSHIP**

The workshop on 'Building Government Management Capacity for Transparent Local Governance' will be organized by the United Nations Governance Centre (UNGC) in partnership with the China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics (CCCCP), in order to identify and explore major issues and challenges related to local government capacity in the region of Asia, especially in the context of the increasing public transparency and accountability. It will be held over the course of two days, from 8 to 9 December 2008 in Beijing, China.

The contents of the workshop will primarily focus on diverse aspects of local government management capacity in Asia, drawing participation from academic experts and governance practitioners in countries such as China, Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, and Thailand, where topics such as decentralization, management capacity, citizen participation, and transparency constitute foremost governance issues.

Attempts to identify and expound the selected topic (and the existing and/or emerging challenges related to it) have not matched the level of its increasing significance, especially in terms of generating a regional consensus as to how local governance ? in particular its management capacity ? could effectively translate itself into the enhancement of public transparency and accountability. The workshop, in view of this context, is both an embodiment of and an investment in the endeavor to provide a common regional platform where stakeholders and interested parties alike could engage in a fruitful and interactive exchange of creative ideas and practical insights into how models of local management capacity contribute to improving transparency, while

searching for possible regional frameworks which can serve as effective common denominator of practical reference and policy recommendation.

## **CONTEXT**

Often considered as one of the most essential tools of good governance, decentralization aims at an improved level of resource allocation, service delivery, and citizen empowerment. However, in spite of being commonly agreed as a necessity, the process of power transfer to local authorities faces numerous political, economic, and socio-cultural challenges, and does not automatically guarantee an enhanced level of democracy of which public transparency and accountability count as crucial prerequisites and outcomes. The transfer of responsibilities in other words does not suffice in and of itself, but must necessarily accompany certain conditions and/or supporting policy instruments in order to bring its expected benefits into practical fruition.

## **SUB THEMES**

The workshop will focus on the following two relevant sub-themes within the context of the overall topic of 'Building Government Management Capacity for Transparent Local Governance':

- Strengthening local capacity through rule of law and accountability
- Citizen participation and empowerment through enhancing local capacity

## **FORMAT**

The workshop will take place over the course of two days, the first day dedicated to country presentations (by either individual local governance practitioner or academic expert specialized in the field of public management capacity), the second to the in-depth group discussion on the sub-themes explored. Country presentations and group discussions will be organized thematically, following the two selected sub themes of the workshop: (i) strengthening local capacity through rule of law; and (ii) strengthening

local capacity through citizen participation. For each of these thematic sessions during the first day, one or two resource persons will deliver a context presentation to introduce the overall background of the topic, while raising critical issues and challenges which merit urgent attention in the region. Participants ? whose total number will approximately amount to 15 to 20 ? will then make country presentations within each session, followed by a 15 to 20 minute Q&A period. On the second day of the workshop, working group discussion sessions will be arranged to explore and exchange further in depth diverse perspectives related to the sub themes, the abridged conceptual results and practical recommendations of which will be then finally put together and be presented by a designated resource person during the wrap-up session.

Government officials and academic experts invited to the workshop will be asked to deliver a presentation from their country about local governance by focusing on the following questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of the innovation and what problems/issues dealing with transparency and local capacity does it try to respond?
2. Who were the stakeholders involved in designing, implementing, and assessing the local government management capacity?
3. What are the tangible results of the innovation related to local government management capacity and which group did it benefit the most?
4. What challenges are encountered in conceiving and implementing the innovation and how ere they overcome? Or what factors account for its success?
5. What makes this innovation transferable to other countries in the region?

The report of the workshop, including presentations by resource persons, country statements and a summary of discussions, will be prepared for wider circulation through the UNGC and UNPAN websites.

## **OUTCOMES AND RESULTS**

The outcomes and results of the workshop will be as follows:

- Country reporting on local governance innovations and good practices to enhance and/or maintain public transparency and accountability
- Close examination of existing and new instruments and mechanisms that could be adopted to build and sustain local government management capacity
- The identification of new trends and issues in the region about local governance

- A venue for exchange and sharing of innovations, good practices and lessons learned to improve governance for the MDGs at local level
- Contributing to a network of institutions interested in promoting accountability and transparency in local governance
- Wide circulation of all workshop documents via posting on the UNGC and UNPAN websites

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