

Message from our incoming co-chair

Dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to have been appointed to act alongside Neil Levine, as co-chair to the Effective Institutions Platform (EIP).

I share the conviction that effective institutions hold the promise to transform public service for a bigger good and improved quality of life for all. Nowadays, we are faced with complex challenges and no one individual or organisation may claim to have the needed solutions. We need each other in order to make progress in the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal no. 16.

The EIP's membership inspires me because of diverse knowledge and experience. I join the EIP as co-chair at a juncture when after three years in existence, a lot has been done to conceive and articulate vision, mission, goals and values for the Platform with a focus on improving the effectiveness of public institutions for better policymaking and service delivery. As a public service practitioner and scholar, I understand the value of strong effective institutions that can be vehicles for change and drivers of economic growth and development.

As the Platform moves into an exciting phase of implementing joint initiatives, we can continue to inform and influence practitioners in the field by challenging ourselves to think about the theory of change underpinning our vision and covering new ground.

What are the characteristics of effective Institutions? How do we build effective institutions that weather the turbulence brought by change of government so that institutions can be the centre that holds and delivers the national vision? How can we ensure that reforms to strengthen today's institutions respond to the changing aspirations of citizens? Do strong effective institutions have a life cycle, how do they differentiate each phase? Given the critical role of strong leadership in building strong effective institutions, who are the leaders of the effective institutions and how they navigate politics?

Monitoring change and measuring improvements in the effectiveness of public institutions will help answer these questions and this is important to build trust in institutions. In Kenya, while there are successful stories from performance contracting systems and Huduma centres (one stop shop to 40 government service) for example, public service reforms continue to be received with mixed results due to lack of indicators to demonstrate value to citizens.

Our efforts also need to focus on getting the capacity equation right. We need competent staff, institutions based on clear legal mandates and driven by clear strategies and plans, clear governance, supportive systems and procedures, as well as a supportive work environment. Leadership has a vital role to play in terms of providing strategic vision, clarity, supervision and accountability for performance.

The EIP's agenda excites me as it grapples with these questions and fundamental issues. Through peer learning, we can unlock successful stories of change – the annual meeting has helped us to identify priority projects, including inclusive policy-making, strengthening a collaborative approach



across accountability actors, transferring the SDG 16 agenda to the country level and understanding further how peer learning works to lead to sustained impact.

Best wishes,

Professor Margaret Kobia, EIP co-chair