



## **High-Level Council on Leadership & Management for Development Inaugural Meeting**

Sunday, 22 September 2019

12:00 pm – 3:00 pm EDT

### **Council Members**

*Present:* George Alleyne, Jamie Cooper, Julio Frenk, Dan Glickman, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Wendy Kopp, Muhammad Ali Pate, Joy Phumaphi (by TC), Jaime Saavedra, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Ernesto Zedillo

*Secretariat:* Peggy Clark, Robert Newman

*Apologies:* Barbara Bush, Helen Clark

*Observers:* Heather Anderson, Alan Court, Katie Drasser, Gloria Kebirungi, Katelyn McEvoy, Ethel Toles

*AMP Health Staff:* Eve Allen, Jordan Morrissey

### **Council Meeting**

The Council agreed at the start of the meeting to observe Chatham House rules, which allows quotations to be shared from the meeting as long as they are not attributed to any specific individual.

### ***Introduction and Key Takeaways***

The inaugural meeting of the High-Level Council on Leadership & Management for Development took place on Sunday, 22 September 2019, in the offices of Mr. Ray Chambers in New York City. The Secretariat welcomed the Council members and introduced the topics of discussion, noting that many crucial development breakthroughs have had strong leadership & management at their core.

By the conclusion of the inaugural meeting, the Council was able to arrive at a consensus around the ideas that:

- Leadership & management are key enablers of stronger and more sustainable development efforts.
- The situation requires meta-leadership: strong leadership in tackling the issue of leadership & management
- There has not yet been adequate investment in leadership & management for development, it will take a multisectoral effort to change that. The Council purposefully pulls members from many disciplines for this reason.
- Expanded investment in leadership & management is an important missing piece of the puzzle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), regardless of sector.

The meeting also helped Council members identify a number of key thematic areas through their discussions, which are summarized below.

### ***Leadership & Management Together***

The Council noted that not all good managers are good leaders, and not all good leaders are good managers. The Council also noted that there is a difference between being a leader in title and being a leader in reality. One Council member asked, “are we training people to make visionary ideas, or people to execute on that vision?” The Council settled on the answer being both: crucial development gains will

not happen without a simultaneous investment in both leadership *and* management. As one Council member observed, leadership & management are at their core the art & science of making things happen. This does not mean that strength in one automatically signals strength in the other, however, both still require individual practice and focus. One Council member noted that “management is doing things right, while leadership is doing the right things,” and that doing both well will get the best out of people.

The Council also noted with concern the rise of the concept of “strong leaders”, and the erosion of civil and respectful exchange. They highlighted the importance of values- and virtue-based leadership, as well as the concept of collective (rather than individual) leadership. One council member observed that bad leaders mobilize the worst of people, while good leaders muster the best.

Strong leadership & management capabilities are critical to achieving local development goals, and more broadly, the SDGs. A Council member observed that “the role of leadership & management is effective and timely implementation of policies and programs for the achievement of goals.” Productive development comes out of good design, favorable political alignment, and strong management & implementation capacity. The Council agreed that leadership & management are critical to this development, and even otherwise thoughtful and well-prepared plans are less effective without them.

The importance of leadership & management applies to development regardless of sector. Multidisciplinary teams and multisectoral approaches can make big gains in development so long as they have strong leadership & management capabilities. More work needs to be put towards “investing in the people who are in charge of investing in people,” one Council member observed, noting that this investment needs to happen both at the systems level and the micro-level in order to have a real impact.

All too often, leadership & management investment has been comprised of short, offsite trainings and programs which leave the participants struggling to apply newly-learned skills to the complex environment of daily work. Meaningful and impactful leadership & management investment must meet participants where they are and stay with them for the duration of their skills development, so that their capabilities mesh with their actual working environments. The Council noted that there have not been enough well-structured opportunities for the development of leadership & management skills in the public sector.

Finally, the Council also noted that there has not yet been a critical mass of people advocating for greater investment in leadership & management. As one Council member observed, it may seem like we are preaching to the choir, but there has not been a choir before now. That said, the Council observed that there is cause for optimism that the tide was turning and cited the fact that 64 countries have signed up to work with the World Bank on the development of Human Capital.

### ***The Importance of Teams as the Focus of Investment***

The Council concluded that more important than individual leaders and managers are their teams, who themselves are comprised of leaders and managers. “Successful CEOs have good teams,” a Council member highlighted, and trust within those teams is crucial to productive development. Another council member observed that teamwork is not necessarily a natural phenomenon and must be cultivated. In order to work effectively, teams need clear guidance, goals, and accountability. In the context of teams, it is especially important to separate individual leadership from institutional leadership. One Council member recalled the famous aphorism that “talent wins games, but teams win championships.” A key

function of individual leadership is to hold the team together, to develop and maintain their trust. “Those who are the best leaders are the best listeners,” and there could be more “values, vision, and vigor” in leaders and managers on all levels.

### ***Measurement and Accountability***

When it comes to greater investment in leadership & management, one Council member noted that “we need to be methodical, systematic, and appreciate that every component needs to have an accountability mechanism built in to make sure that we are delivering results.”

Increased leadership & management capability is hard to measure and quantify, especially since its indirect effects take time to manifest. The short-term effects of this investment – which are positive – have been getting better documentation recently, which has been helping to slowly build the evidence base for leadership & management. It is also crucial to measure impact, rather than just inputs. This puts the focus on long-term results and discourages shorter-term methods, which are often less meaningful. One of the problems today is that the pressure for quick results has disincentivized global and country-level investment in leadership & management.

The Council discussed several different measurement and accountability mechanisms, including a leadership & management scorecard, a compilation of data on World Bank investments in leadership & management thus far, and an accountability mechanism for the systems that should be developing leadership & management skills in the workforce, such as among teachers and nurses. At least some of the scorecards that currently exist are owned by the governments they are measuring and are used as accountability mechanisms by those governments.

While accountability is crucial, it must be done right. One cannot be held responsible for something that is not measured, and in order to make this responsibility clear, the country must formally agree to it and then be consistently transparent in its work and in reporting results. The burden of accountability ultimately falls on the government itself. The Council also noted the important role of civil society in holding governments accountable.

Local governments have especially suffered from the lack of investment, as they are often ignored in development efforts, creating a cycle where they do not have the adequate leadership & management capabilities to inspire investment, which leaves them with less investment and thus fewer leadership & management capabilities.

### ***The Need for a Multi-Disciplinary Approach that also Engages the Private Sector***

One Council member noted that CEOs were replacing elected leaders as agents of change, and the Council shared that one way to reverse this trend would be to engage the private sector in building public sector capacity. They noted that there has been a historic reluctance to do so. The Council also remarked that we cannot make progress towards achieving the SDGs by working in silos, and that the SDGs should be seen as indivisible. The Council also noted that efforts to domesticate the SDGs at national and subnational levels have been insufficient. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop multi-disciplinary teams at country level to advance the SDGs, which in turn requires the leadership & management skills to see multi-sectoral collaboration as a necessity not a threat.

### ***Evidence and Exemplars***

The Council highlighted that there is inadequate evidence that investment in leadership & management works to drive development. Alongside evidence to prove its worth, leadership & management needs exemplars to tell its story. Institutional inertia slows down the evidence-gathering process, especially since there is a lack of consensus on how to accurately measure leadership & management skills and their impacts.

The Council recommended developing a set of narrative case studies on examples of exceptionally good and bad leadership & management, in order to explore the complexity of the situations to get to the core of how leadership & management impacted the outcomes. These case studies should pull from both private and public sector examples; it was noted that the private sector often treats leadership & management skills as more crucial to the mission than the public sector.

The response to the Ebola crisis, for example, could serve as an exemplar of good leadership & management in some countries – especially as it focused on retaining public trust – and of bad leadership & management in others. In one example of developing a health system, a Council member noted that it was crucial to “identify the local level where leadership is, and what can be done to incentivize it, encourage it, dignify it, and give it a role in place.”

### ***Next Steps***

There was strong agreement among the Council members that leadership & management is chronically under-resourced in development and represents an untapped opportunity to accelerate development. The next steps for the Council must be both tangible and believable in order to be achievable.

The Council agreed that the next step is to develop a conceptual framework of the problem, in order to determine how to solve it. This includes investigating how much funding is being allocated towards leadership & management, and how much of that is actually being spent and utilized. Looking into the budgeting for leadership & management in individual countries can also illuminate how important each country finds leadership & management to be.

These data are not easily accessible or compiled, however, and the Council agreed that a good place to start would be to research the World Bank’s funding allocations towards leadership & management. While most money for these purposes is spent by individual governments, the small amount that multilateral institutions such as the World Bank spend is crucial to leveraging the rest of the funding. The Council commented that it should also devise a set of recommendations to help compile, create, and strengthen leadership & management networks.

The Council has agreed to meet via teleconference on a quarterly basis, meeting again in person in September 2020 to release a white paper and September 2021 to release a call-to-action. Following discussion with some members, the Secretariat is also investigating the idea of convening the Council in-person for a multi-day meeting to explore more deeply some of the key issues raised, including understanding the landscape of current investments, cataloging exemplars, and mapping out opportunities to influence the conversation about the role of leadership & management in development. The Council will continue to coordinate via e-mail and phone between meetings.