

**COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT
(CSTD)**

**Twentieth Session
Geneva, 8 to 12 May 2017**

**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on
their efforts in 2016 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

Submission by

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 20th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

**Report on the Implementation of the Outcomes of
the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)**

(January – December 2016)

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

I. Executive Summary

1. As the leading facilitator for Action Lines C1, C7eGov, and C11, as member of the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), and manager of the IGF¹ Secretariat, DESA continued its efforts to promote policy dialogue and advocacy among United Nations bodies, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and partners for the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). This has involved a number of initiatives listed in Part II of this report. DESA has ensured, in addition, a comprehensive exchange of views, information and experiences among WSIS stakeholders. It has provided advisory services and technical assistance to some developing countries.

II. Analytical Overview

A. Meetings, missions and projects

2. As in the past, the annual Facilitation Meeting of Lines C1, C7 and C11 of the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda was organized in May during the 2016 WSIS Forum in Geneva. The issues discussed included recognition of the role of ICTs in achieving SDGs especially in realizing the principle of leave no one behind, equity in providing access and treating all groups equally, strengthening capacity building especially in the area of regulation and sharing experiences on e-strategies among Member States, overall situation of e-government development in the world, digital economy and its implications on e-government, e-participation initiatives at the local level, challenges including availability of local content, affordability, and capacity building, access issues affecting e-government services, lack of implementation of e-government strategy documents and lack of ownership of these documents, digital gender divide and the United Nations E-government Survey and other measuring tools.
3. One important instrument for monitoring the implementation of action line C7 (e-government) at the global level is the United Nations E-Government Survey. Since 2003, the Survey, which is prepared by DESA, has presented a systematic assessment of the use and potential of ICTs to transform the public sector by

¹ <http://www.intgovforum.org/>

enhancing its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, accountability, as well as access to public services and people participation. By studying broad patterns of e-government around the world, the Survey assesses the e-government development status of the 193 United Nations Member States. It aims to serve as a tool for decision-makers to identify their areas of strength and challenges in e-government to inform policies and strategies.

4. The 2016 Survey titled “E-Government for Sustainable Development” highlighted emerging e-government issues and trends, and identified challenges and opportunities for e-government as an enabler of good governance for sustainable development. Its overall objective was to provide policy-relevant analysis of how governments can utilize new technologies in public administration to increase the impact of sustainable development efforts. In particular, the report offered suggestions on how to utilize ICTs to enable coherent policy frameworks and institutional coordination; promote transparent and accountable institutions through open government data; establish innovative mechanisms to engage people through e-participation; and respond to the challenges of providing inclusive and equitable services.
5. The 2016 Survey also provided new evidence that e-government has the potential to help support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). At the regional level, the Survey found that Europe continued to lead on e-government, followed by the Americas, Asia, Oceania and Africa. According to the Survey, e-government has grown with a rapid pace over the past 15 years. The report also noted however the persistent digital divide between and within countries. This calls for measures to develop infrastructure, ensure access to internet and IT build capacities, provide funding and support and build the skills of all people. Such steps must be urgently taken in order to achieve the Agenda 2030 Target 9.c which calls for increased access to ICT and providing universal and affordable access to the Internet in LDCs by 2020
6. DESA also organized the first annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum) on 6-7 June 2016, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Forum is one of the three components of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism created at the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development and launched at the September 2015 Summit. The 2016 STI Forum addressed the topic "realizing the potential of science, technology and innovation for all to achieve the SDGs. The forum was well attended, with more than 600 participants representing 81 Governments and more than 350 scientists, innovators, technology specialists, entrepreneurs and civil society representatives.
7. The United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) convened its 15th Session from 18 to 22 April 2016 at the UN Headquarters in New York. The main subject of discussion was transforming public institutions for integrated and inclusive policy making and review of the SDGs. The Committee decided to place the SDGs at the centre of its work, with particular attention to Goal 16. The Committee also recognized the positive role of ICT in enabling transparency and accountability,

complemented by other measures to ensure that government is open, inclusive and participatory.

8. DESA also organized a side event of the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly on “The Role of Governments and All Stakeholders in Mobilizing ICTs for Sustainable Development” discussions at the United Nations Secretariat on 13 October 2016. The discussions underscored the role ICT can play in achieving the 2030 Agenda. On connectivity, some speakers felt it would be challenging to realize Target 9.c of the SDGs which calls for increased access to ICT and providing universal and affordable access to the Internet in LDCs by 2020. In order to mobilize ICT for the poor, policies needed to focus not only on the ICT area, but also on aspects such as accountability of institutions, skills and the legal and regulatory frameworks that support competition in the ICT area. Overall, there was a strong emphasis that solutions for mobilizing ICT for the poor are country specific. It was reemphasized that ICTs are not a shortcut to development, but can be a very efficient accelerator.
9. DESA organized a workshop on 26 May in conjunction with the Ministry of Information and Communication of Kazakhstan during the Astana Economic Forum held from 22 to 28 May 2016. The focus of the workshop was “Bridging the Digital Divide between People and Countries”. There was consensus among the speakers that ICT for development will play an important part in meeting the goals and targets of the SDGs. Thereby issues such as digital literacy, open government broadband infrastructure, content in the local languages, and use of social media were all seen as pillars on which Member States could provide better services to their citizens. At the same time, there was a concern for ensuring that no one is left behind in a world where ICT are of critical importance. Various possible solutions were discussed.
10. DESA also attended the E-government Forum that was held by Chinese Academy of Governance and State Information Centre in Beijing on 30th July 2016. A Chinese version of "United Nations E-government Survey 2016" was issued during the Forum as well as the "Annual Report on China's E-government Development (2015-2016)" and the "Report on E-government Development Level of Cities in China 2016". The Chinese Academy of Governance has been cooperating with DESA since 2012 to promote and cooperate on e-government.
11. DESA, through the United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), organized two thematic sessions on localizing SDGs through institutional coordination, policy integration and government innovation at national and local levels in Jeju, Republic of Korea, from 25 to 26 May 2016. The thematic sessions were organized in collaboration with the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA) within the framework of the 2016 Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity. The purpose of organizing the sessions was to provide a platform for discussion on policy integration among national and local governments for vertical coherence through collaboration and open government. In particular, the thematic sessions looked at how national-local institutional and governance structures can be strengthened to localize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the use of ICT. They furthermore addressed collaborative governance and open government as a means

to enhance accountability, transparency and citizen engagement.

12. From 9 to 10 November 2016 DESA/UNPOG organized a workshop titled Transforming Public Institutions for Effective Implementation of the SDGs during the Gov 3.0 Global Forum 2016 in Busan, which was organised by the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) of the Republic of Korea. While the overall Forum provided a venue for exchanging knowledge on public sector innovation, UNPOG's workshop focused on sharing knowledge and good country practices on SDG implementation. It included three sessions on translating SDGs into national development plans, institutional coordination and policy integration for implementation of SDGs, and bridging the digital divide for inclusive service delivery. In particular, during the workshop, the countries which were engaged in the Voluntary National Review during 2016 High-Level Political Forum shared their experiences and practices in pursuit of SDGs. Other countries as well as international organizations presented their innovative cases on institutional arrangements they put in place to implement the SDGs, with a particular focus on whole-of-government approaches and capacities needed to bridge the digital divide within public institutions and among vulnerable groups in society.
13. In Africa, DESA undertook an advisory mission to the Ministry of Youth and ICT in Rwanda from 15 to 19 February 2016. After articulating the need of a national e-government vision and strategy that comply with SDGs, DESA delivered a capacity building workshops for officials from different ministries to improve online public service delivery during Rwanda's E-Government Week.
14. In Latin America, DESA has supported the Centre for Innovation on e-Government Development in Colombia and UNDP. The Centre promotes regional cooperation, a website for innovation and is institutionalized within the ICT Ministry (MINTIC). Moreover, as a result of a DESA mission to Bogotá, Colombia from 24 to 27 May 2016, the ICT Ministry of Colombia requested DESA to remain as a partner in the Project "Centre for Innovation" (2016-2018). DESA has also provided advisory missions on e-government development in a number of countries, including Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Mexico.. DESA conducted a workshop in Ecuador from 8 to 11 November 2016 on Digital Government for Sustainable Development.
15. In 2016 DESA continued implementation of the project "Strengthening of capacities of developing countries to provide access to information for sustainable development through Open Government Data (OGD)". The aim of the project is to enhance the knowledge and skills of officials on open government data (OGD) for greater transparency, accountability and responsive public service delivery. The project focused on four developing countries - Bangladesh, Nepal, Panama and Uruguay - and supported the government officials and other stakeholders to address capacity gaps in OGD publishing and setting OGD legislative and institutional frameworks. Under the same project, the workshop on 'Action Planning for Open Government Data for Sustainable Development in Latin America' was co-organized by DESA and ECLAC in Santiago, Chile from 26 to 28 September 2016. The purpose was to exchange experiences on advancing open government data for sustainable

development. The participants analyzed and provided inputs to the OGD action plans drafted by the Governments of Panama and Uruguay. Similarly, another workshop titled 'Action Planning for Open Government Data for Sustainable Development in East Asia' was co-organized by DESA and ESCAP in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3 to 6 October 2016. As the participants had previously provided inputs to OGD action plans drafted by the governments of Bangladesh and Nepal, they reflected on how to maximize the impact of OGD advancement strategies for implementation of the SDGs through increasing access to information for transparency, accountability and responsive public service delivery.

16. Among the OGD project activities undertaken in 2016 were two national substantive trainings in OGD in Bangladesh and Nepal, two study tours for Panamanian and Uruguayan delegations to Colombia and USA respectively, one joint study tour for Bangladeshi and Nepali delegations to the Republic of Korea, and two regional events for Latin American countries in Santiago, Chile, and East-Asian countries in Bangkok, Thailand. These events provided learning opportunities at national and regional levels on a range of issues related to publishing government data in open formats and drafting OGD Action Plans for four countries: Bangladesh, Nepal, Panama and Uruguay. Progress was also made in strengthening the OGD ecosystem and in the development/enhancement of OGD action plans in each of the aforementioned countries.
17. As part of the activities under Development Account Project UAE 16X01 titled "e-Government Initiatives for UAE", DESA undertook a capacity-building mission to the UAE from 15 to 22 May 2016 and delivered workshops on Measurement and Evaluation Tool for e Government Readiness (METER) and Measuring and Evaluation e-Participation (METEP). In addition, DESA met the UAE Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) team to discuss developing better citizen-driven content and with more integrated services. At the request of TRA, a follow-up workshop on the use of e-government in implementing the SDGs was conducted by DESA in the United Arab Emirates(UAE) from 4 to 8 September 2016.
18. As part of the development account project titled 'Evidence-based e-government policies for advancing governmental service delivery and accountability in support of the Sustainable Development Goals', DESA conducted a scoping exercise and need assessments in Bangladesh between from 17 to 21 October 2016. The mission also aimed to identify key institutions and government officials, as well as to collect existing sources of data and data gaps, on the extent and potential to which government digital services could be leveraged.. During the mission, around 15 government officials were trained in using DESA's capacity development tools METER and METEP.
19. DESA continued strengthening its partnership and cooperation with international institutions and regional commissions in accordance with the action line C11. DESA met with the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Digital Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister of Estonia and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in March 2016. Furthermore, DESA attended the meeting on "Advancing Digital Government

Capabilities for Sustainable Development Goals” on 29 June 2016 at the request of United Nations University. The partners agreed to explore further collaboration regarding WSIS follow-up and online training materials in the area of digital government and ICT for development. In addition, DESA participated remotely in a one day workshop on 6 September 2016, on the topic of Digital Government Indicators, organized by OECD. The workshop focused on how to design new digital government indicators by assessing countries’ efforts to leverage digital technologies for public sector productivity and inclusive governance. DESA also remotely attended the OECD e-leaders meeting which took place from 22 to 23 September in Tallinn, Estonia. This was the annual meeting of delegate members of the official OECD body called Working Party of Senior Digital Government Officials. DESA participated at the 57th meeting of the Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in Hyderabad, India from 5 to 9 November 2016. This was the first ICANN meeting after the expiration of its contract with the government of the United States.

20. Over the course of 2016, a number of requests for advisory services and technical assistance were received to support Member States in their efforts to enhance and build capacity in e-government through missions and teleconferences.
21. DESA is reflecting on critical actions to support the WSIS follow-up in the year to come

B. Resources and tools

22. In support of public sector development and reform, through the use of ICTs, DESA has monitored Member States’ progress on e-government since 2003. The next edition of the biannual E-Government Survey, covering all 193 Member States, will be released in 2018.
23. DESA has also continued to further enhance its existing tools in 2016 in promoting e-government, e-participation and ICTs for development.
24. Measurement and Evaluation Tool for E-Government Readiness (METER²) is an online interactive tool to assist governments and decision makers at any level throughout the world in developing, monitoring, refining and improving the context within which information and communication technologies are used to transform government, creating the context for e-government.
25. Measurement and Evaluation Tool for Engagement and E-Participation (METEP³) is an interactive tool to assist governments, civil society, private sector and multi-stakeholder communities to measure and qualitatively assess level, performance and further development of civic engagement and e-participation through ICTs at both national and local levels.

² <http://www.unmeter.org/>

³ <http://metep.org/>

26. Open Government Data (OGD) Readiness Assessment⁴ was created to assist governments in assessing how prepared a country is for the adoption and implementation of an OGD initiative.
27. DESA continued to strengthen the technical capacity of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) Online Training Centre, an online governance and public administration learning platform. . Encompassing 17 interactive and 32 pdf-based capacity-building courses, the various topics in public administration and management are presented to online trainees in a multilingual environment. During 2016, the interactive courses were delivered to more than 2500 participants from around the world.

C. Internet Governance Forum

28. The 11th annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF): ‘Enabling Inclusive and Sustainable Growth’, took place from 6-9 December 2016 in Guadalajara, Mexico. The 2016 overall programme and IGF community activities have been built in a bottom-up manner in consultation with the growing IGF multistakeholder community, with an aim to enhance participation from stakeholders from developing countries, youth and those joining the IGF online.
29. The 2016 IGF marked the first IGF following its 10-year mandate renewal by the General Assembly at the WSIS+10 High Level Event in 2015. With the overarching theme of ‘Enabling Inclusive and Sustainable Growth’, more than 2000 delegates from 83 countries participated in approximately 200 sessions at the IGF, with thousands more stakeholders engaged online through real-time transcription and web conferencing. There were more than 10,000 live Youtube viewers following the interactive dialogue. The range and scope of the main sessions, open forums and workshops reflected both the complexity and the multi-linkages of the Internet with the economies and social fabrics, as well as with the entire 2030 Agenda, as repeatedly reiterated by various speakers.
30. High-level Main Sessions were held on timely issues such as ‘Assessing the Role of Internet Governance in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)’; ‘Sustainable Development, Internet and Inclusive Growth’; ‘Human Rights: Broadening the Conversation’; ‘Trade Agreements and the Internet’ and ‘Shaping the Future of Internet Governance’ and will also showcase the work of IGF Dynamic Coalitions (DCs)’; National and Regional IGFs (NRIs) and community work being carried out by the IGF Best Practice Forums (BPFs) and Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion(s).
31. The active participation of Governments were felt this year, with more open forum sessions held than in any previous IGF. Organizers of the 34 open forums – a session type traditionally reserved for Governments, IGOs and relevant international organizations – included the Governments of China, Cuba, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Japan and Mexico, as well as the African Union, European Commission,

⁴ <https://publicadministration.un.org/en/ogdassessment>

Organization of American States (OAS) and OECD.

32. The IGF Village also hosted a record number of booths. Over 40 exhibitors from across the stakeholder spectrum had the chance to promote their work, network and create partnerships among the IGF's participants.
33. Throughout the past year IGF stakeholders have been highly engaged in IGF community activities such as the IGF Best Practice Forums (BPFs) on diverse issues such as IPv6, IXPs, Cybersecurity and Gender and Access, work on the Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion(s) initiative and IGF Dynamic Coalitions, which all offer unique multi-stakeholder platforms for substantive collaboration on a wide array of Internet governance themes and issues. This community work showcased, and opened for further consultation, at the annual meeting in Mexico.
34. One significant impact of the IGF was the organic growth of the national and regional IGF (NRI) initiatives. This year, for the first time, a dedicated main session focussed on the NRI initiatives, that are independent in their work but organized in accordance with the core IGF principles of being multistakeholder, bottom-up, inclusive, open, transparent and non-commercial. The NRI network nearly doubled since the 10th IGF, growing from 37 NRIs at the end of 2015 to a current record of 72 recognised NRIs.
35. The 11th IGF also aimed to enhance linkages among discussions, recommendations and policy options from other relevant Internet Governance discussion fora and institutions. Furthermore, Governments, UN organizations, NRIs and other relevant Internet governance organizations and stakeholders were encouraged to take forward key ideas raised within the IGF.
36. Other innovations this year included a strengthened dedicated track for IGF newcomers participating in an IGF annual meeting for the first time; improved capacity building opportunities; more opportunities for young people to engage and enhanced online participation capabilities.

D. Enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet

37. Paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society calls for enhanced cooperation on Internet-related international public policy issues among governments and other stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, the Internet technical community and intergovernmental organizations, in their respective areas of competence and mandate. In this regard, the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly, in the recent ICT4D resolution (A/C.2/71/L.15 draft), noted the proposal by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the structure and composition of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation and welcomed the establishment of the working group. It also took note of its ongoing work to develop recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, and noted that the group will ensure full involvement of governments and other relevant

stakeholders, particularly from developing countries, taking into account all their diverse views and expertise.

Part III

A. Innovative policies and programmes

38. E-government has grown rapidly over the past 15 years, since the first attempt of the United Nations to benchmark e-government in 2001. In the 2016 UN E-Government Survey, 29 countries score “very high”, with e-government development index (EGDI) values in the range of 0.75 to 1.00, as compared to only 10 countries in 2003. Since 2014, all 193 Member States of the UN have some form of online presence. E-government is now ubiquitous in many more countries, a stark contrast in comparison to 2003 – when 18 countries or about 10% of countries globally were without any online presence.⁵ 51 per cent of countries had “low EGDI” or “medium EGDI” values in 2016, as compared to over 73 per cent of countries in 2003.
39. According to the 2016 UN E-Government Survey, a new trend in e-government has been the evolution towards the provision of integrated public services online through, among others, one-stop platforms allowing access to a range of public services. This approach makes it easier for people to interact with public administration and get adequate and holistic responses to their queries and needs.
40. Along with integrated services, e-government may increasingly support policy integration and encourage the efforts of various government institutions to work more closely together as stated in the 2016 edition of the UN E-Government Survey. It can provide governments with increased insights to help revisit existing decision making processes and work flows. This can help achieve more integrated policies and work flows – a critical condition for realizing the SDGs. Progress is however slow. Although there are examples of successful integration of policies within the social area for example, integrating policies and services across the economic, social and environmental areas remains difficult. Efforts to promote whole-of-government service delivery and policies have to be accompanied with efforts to ensure that organizational cultures, coordination mechanisms and financial and accountability systems support collaboration among public institutions.
41. In an effort to make public institutions more inclusive, effective, accountable and transparent, many governments across the globe are opening up their data for public information and scrutiny. According to the 2016 United Nations E-Government Survey 128 out of 193 UN Member States provides datasets on government spending in machine readable formats. The remaining 65 have no such information online.
42. E-participation is expanding all over the world. With growing access to social media, an increasing number of countries now proactively use networking opportunities to engage with people and evolve towards participatory decision-making as recommended by one of the targets of the SDGs. This is done through open data, online consultations and multiple ICT-related channels. While developed countries,

especially European countries, are among the top 50 performers in the 2016 UN E-Government Survey, many developing countries are making good progress as well; especially lower-middle income countries. In general, a country's lower income level is not an obstacle to posting basic public sector information online on national portals or using social media and other innovative means for consulting and engaging people on a broad range of development-related issues. Yet, a country's income level matters when it comes to developing more technically complex and specialized e-participation portals, such as for e-petitioning or online consultation and deliberation. Low income countries need to be supported in addressing such challenges. A critical challenge remains to ensure that the newest approaches to engaging people in decision making and expressing their needs and opinions actually allow the poorest and most vulnerable to express their positions and contribute. This requires accompanying measures in various areas.

B. Future actions

43. Moving forward, ICT will be an important driving force that can help reach the SDGs in 2030. A major challenge in the years to come is to ensure universal access to internet but also to direct the huge potential and creativity that come with ICT so that they help reach the SDGs and improve people's lives. Effective participation of governments and all stakeholders is vital in developing the information society. This ongoing process requires cooperation and partnerships among all. However, there are several challenges. A greater vision and leadership as well as political support are necessary elements for the deployment of ICTs. There is also need for more mature e-strategies and stronger linkages between strategy documents and implementation processes. Stronger harmony between stakeholders who work on e-strategies and constant monitoring of the progress would also contribute to the further development of information societies. With the 2030 Agenda, there is a dire need to relate strategies in the area of ICT with national efforts to implement the SDGs. This is a way to bring technology to bear on the realization of the SDGs.
44. As stated in the Chair's Summary of the 2016 STI Forum, it will be critical to assess how technology can be mobilized to provide solutions to our greatest challenges. In that respect, various sources of knowledge, including indigenous knowledge, should be considered. This is likely to require new ways to approach the science-policy interface. Rapid advances in ICT, energy technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neurotechnology and other technologies will affect all sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, construction and transportation. Taking advantage of those technologies to advance social and economic inclusion, as well as to promote environmental sustainability and peace, will call for a transformation of societies. New technologies will emerge, while those that are currently nascent will be commercialized. With respect to the role of science, technology and innovation, it is necessary to look beyond the coming 15 years, given that the transformations that are required have longer time horizons.
45. Despite the considerable investments in finance and human resources and the related development gains, e-government divides, just as digital divides, exist between and within regions and countries. Access issues for people and for

government employees particularly in remote areas and low citizen use still seem big challenges ahead. Regional trends have remained largely unchanged over the past 15 years: in 2016, there is a huge gap between African countries, with a low EGDI average of 0.2882, and European countries, with EGDI average of 0.7241. Oceania countries, with an average EGDI of 0.4154, are also below the global average of 0.4623. Asia and the Americas are very close, with average EGDI values of 0.5132 and 0.5245 respectively.

46. As stated in the 2016 UN E-Government Survey, moving forward, concerted efforts are needed to: (i) establish global, national and local e-government indicators to better understand e-government's impact on sustainable development; (ii) adopt a fully inclusive approach to e-government development including through bridging all digital divides and ensuring multilingualism; and (iii) enhance global and regional cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, and public-private partnerships. Further work is needed to better understand the expectations people have from e-government and the use they make of it, so that the systems put in place help to improve people's wellbeing, respond to their needs and empower them to contribute to policy making and public services. Also critical is to understand how to ensure that e-government truly brings improvement in the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable, so that no one is left behind. The same applies to how non-state actors, including NGOs and the private sector, engage with e-government; be it to deliver better services to people or make their voices heard. Beyond this, the real challenge is making sure e-Government is geared at realizing the SDGs and building the better world all world leaders outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
47. There seems to be a convergence between digital government and knowledge societies essentially creating conditions for self-development of services at the local levels. Therefore, inclusion of people while implementing local services has to be ensured and innovations have to be explored while keeping focus on the realization of the SDGs. The due clarification of how much people are actually using these services and what kind of impact their feedback and views have on the actual decision making and service delivery need to be further explored. Besides, the design of programs in a practical manner and addressing the feminization of poverty by giving girls access to ICTs could strengthen the reach of ICTs and e-government. A new framework for digital government assessment is also necessary and existing assessments need to be incrementally adopted. There is also an ongoing need for revisiting WSIS action lines to adapt to the evolving needs of information society based on recent developments in ICTs and to ensure that ICT are mobilized for realizing the SDGs.
48. DESA will continue to promote ICTs as catalysts for realizing the 2030 Agenda and to encourage further partnerships among all stakeholders. It will also support governments in their efforts to promote a holistic use of ICT and e-government to addressing complex challenges, particularly through collaborative governance and whole-of-government service delivery for sustainable development, open government data initiatives and e-participation.