



DPADM Monthly Update to CEPA Members: April 2012

1. Launch of the Chinese edition of the "United Nations E-Government Survey 2012: E-Government for the People" in Beijing, China

More than 200 senior officials from the central and local ministries responsible for e-government and information technology in China, research and academia institutions engaged in e-government, as well as several industry representatives, learned more about global e-government development trends at the launch of the Chinese edition of the "United Nations E-Government Survey 2012: E-Government for the People" in Beijing, China, on 26 March 2012. For the first time since 2001, the UN Survey 2012 was translated to the Chinese language through collaboration between DPADM/DESA and the Chinese Academy of Governance (CAG), China

Ms. Haiyan Qian, Director of DPADM, shared global findings and development trends related to the UN Survey after Mr. Hong Yi, Vice President (vice-ministerial level) of CAG, delivered the opening statement. Dr. Zhou Hongren, Executive Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee for State Informatisation, who is also responsible for the development of information systems for the Chinese Government, reported on the past, current and future development of China's e-government.

Established in 1994, the Chinese Academy of Governance, formerly named China National School of Administration, is a training centre for mid and senior government officials owned by the State Council of the Chinese Government. The presidency of CAG is concurrently held by Mr. Ma Kai, State Councilor and Secretary-General of the State Council of China, and Mr. Li Jianhua, Executive Vice-President (ministerial level) of CAG.

On 27 March 2012, Ms. Qian was invited by Tsinghua University, China, to speak to graduate students at its School of Public Policy and Management, to both international graduate students and mid-career central and local government officials in China on public administration work at the United Nations.

2. Interview with Itar-Tass News Agency in Russia

Intar-Tass News Agency of Russia interviewed Ms. Haiyan Qian, for the United Nations E-Government Survey 2012. The News Agency expressed its pleasure in seeing the Russian Federation's progress the new edition. Ms. Qian gave several reasons for the improvement, including; (i) increased commitment and leadership with clear vision at all levels of the government for the best use of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools to meet the citizens' needs; (ii) proper allocation of resources; and (iii) improved e-participation via citizen feedback. Ms. Qian agreed that young technocrats in the government also help to improve the e-government progress since they are more likely to advocate for the improvement of technology, infrastructure, and bridging the digital divide. She added the Russian Federation's e-government platform performs well in *Stage 1 and 2* of the e-government which focuses on presence and enhanced one-way or simple two-way e-communication between government and citizen such as downloadable forms for government services but needs improvement in *Stage 3 transactional services* which engage in two-way communication with their citizens, including requesting and receiving inputs on government policies, programmes, regulations, etc.



3. Interview with Economist Intelligence Unit

The Economist Intelligence Unit, sponsored by Tele2, interviewed Ms. Haiyan Qian on the subject of digital divide on 10 April 2012. Ms. Qian provided global perspective on; (i) the primary digital divide concerns; (ii) the most and least successful strategies for overcoming the digital divide; and (iii) the challenges we should focus in the future. The interview was conducted for the policy-oriented white paper which is read by executives around the world.

4. Capacity Building for Parliamentary Work in Chad

DESA through DPADM received the request to execute a two year project to strengthen the work of the newly elected parliament of the Republic of Chad in cooperation with the UNDP. The project aims to provide the advisory services to strengthen administrative procedures and to develop capacities of the members of parliament.

During an advisory mission in February, it was assessed that the work of the parliament requires capacity building. For example, activities and training can be conducted to improve the outreach of members of parliament to engage and better respond to their constituencies. Considering the post-conflict context of Chad and its physical proximity to the countries which have experienced the Arab Spring, these activities are considered as highly relevant by the government and the UNDP in Chad.

The new project is in line with priorities of the new UNDP Country Programme and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Chad. A proposed budget of just under USD 500,000 is currently being discussed for DESA as executing agent. The fund will be provided by the UNDP and the Government of Chad. The work programme and the budget will be finalized during a follow-up mission to N'Djamena in early May.

5. Meeting with Azerbaijan Delegation

The Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan met with Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economics and Social Affairs and Ms. Haiyan Qian and Mr. Vyacheslav Cherkasov from DPADM to discuss the the joint preparation of the 2012 Internet Governance Forum (IGF) that will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan from 6 to 9 November 2012, as well as related activities in the area of ICT for development.

Mr. Sha expressed his appreciation to the delegation for the decision to host 2012 IGF and reassured them DESA through DPADM will provide all the necessary administrative and substantive support to the Government to ensure the success of the event and encouraged the Government of Azerbaijan to start working on the Host Country Agreement as soon as possible.

Mr. Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, updated Mr. Sha on the Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway project (TASIM) that is set to further develop the knowledge-base economy and support the Information Society, and to increase connectivity and e-service for the promotion of industrial development and diversification of economy in the countries of Eurasian continent. He welcomed Mr. Sha's proposal and recommendation that the TASIM project could be presented during the Rio+20 global conference on sustainable development and that the delegation



discuss it with the respective governmental and UN offices. The Government of Azerbaijan will then continue its work on the preparation of the 2012 IGF and come back to DESA after the proposal on the TASIM project has been discussed with the relevant national agencies.

6. Branch Presents Preliminary Research Findings on UNPACS Findings at the Divisional Meeting

The eGB branch of the DPADM shared their preliminary researching findings on the e-government strategies and e-government officials and institutions with the divisional colleagues at the divisional meeting. For Americas and the Caribbean, the analysis was focused on correlating e-government strategies as they appear in UNPACS and the e-government performance, as per the UN E-Government Survey. One preliminary key finding is that a combination of legal and institutional frameworks, existence of an action plan with concrete objectives, a clear division of responsibilities and a specific budget contributed to coordinate governmental functions around an effective e-government strategy.

For Asia and the Pacific, the analysis was focused on the utility of the UNPACS data (particularly, the latest e-government officials and institutions information) for discerning institutional frameworks of the Asian-Pacific countries and also explored the question of how such data can be used in a robust way to assess the impact of institutional frameworks on e-government development. It was concluded that some conditions (e.g., data quality, validation and a clear definition of "institutional frameworks") are needed to exploit the full potential of the UNPACS.

For Sub-Saharan Africa, the analysis was focused on the interrelationship between the national e-government strategies, institutional frameworks and the e-government index for the region. An empirical review showed that the positive correlations amongst the three variables stands only if the strategies are matched with human, technical and financial resources and the institutional frameworks are equipped with the required mandate along with empowered e-Leaders.

7. UNPAN Management Unit (UMU) Presents Primary Research Findings on Open Government Data at the Divisional Meeting

The UNPAN Management Unit (UMU) of DPADM presented the progress and major findings of the research on Open Government Data (OGD) and Services. UMU's research on this emerging topic is focused on quantitative and qualitative analysis of: (a) Freedom of Information and Data Protection Legislations; (b) Institutional Frameworks including Information and Privacy Commissioners; and (c) Data Catalogues and Applications. Covering all 193 UN Member States, the research's key-findings can be summarized on the following: (i) Comprehensive Freedom of Information laws are the first step towards OGD initiatives; (ii) a Freedom of Information law itself does not guarantee that the right to access information is actually granted to citizens; (iii) usually there is no strong supporting legislation for Open Government Data Catalogues (iv) existing OGD initiatives are administered by different public bodies in governments, such as Offices of Prime-Ministers, Transparency Boards, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Communications, etc., which may be difficult for the harmonization of the international business practices; (v) international cooperation has been less effective in promoting regional coordination and harmonization in data privacy issues (vi) there is no worldwide



institutional framework to facilitate implementation and oversight of Freedom of Information and Data Privacy in the Member States. However, the vast majority of European Member States facilitate an independent Freedom of Information and Data Privacy Body.

8. In-house Seminar on the Economic Democracy Index

On April 24, DPADM hosted an In-house Seminar on the Economist Democracy Index methodology with Mr. Robert Wood, Senior Editor of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). Mr. Wood presented the main features of the methodologies used by the EIU team for assessing and rating country risks and economic forecasts. He also explained how the political factors are taken into consideration on country analysis. The participants from the Division and other UN agencies asked questions and exchanged ideas with the speaker. Ms. Haiyan Qian welcomed and thanked Mr. Wood for providing detailed information on their research methodology. Mr. Wood expressed his intentions to further collaborate with the Division's work on public governance and also invited the EIU's team to consider e-government aspects in EIU's future analysis in regards to participatory governance and transparency.