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**Statement by**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to take part in this exciting sixth conference about the theory and practice of e-governance. The current theme, “Open Innovation for Global Change” summarizes well the challenges and opportunities currently facing government worldwide. It is also my pleasure to deliver a message on behalf of Ms. Haiyan Qian, Director of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, who sends her regrets that she could not be with us today. I quote:

As custodians of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, I would like to share with you some trends towards an emerging paradigm for public service delivery, particularly in developing countries. I would like to briefly outline what a better future might look like and how the transformative power of e-governance can help us get there.

More than 10 years ago, world leaders set 2015 as the deadline for achieving a set of specific targets on poverty alleviation, education, gender equality, child and maternal health, environmental protection, prevention of communicable diseases and a global partnership for development – the well-known Millennium Development Goals – more commonly known as the MDGs.

The MDGs have made a huge impact on the lives of billions. Extreme poverty has fallen in every region; the proportion of people without access to decent water has been cut in half; housing conditions have improved for more than 200 million slum dwellers; 40 million more children are attending school; the world has achieved parity in primary education between girls and boys; and an estimated 5.2 million people in low and middle-income countries are now receiving life-saving HIV treatment.

But progress has been uneven. Some 800 million people are still living in hunger. And, in some countries, especially those faced by conflict, progress has lagged on all fronts, leaving many of the most vulnerable behind. And even if the MDGs are fully achieved, much unfinished business will remain. Almost 1 billion people will still be living in extreme poverty and there will be continuing gaps on hunger, health, gender equality, water, sanitation and many other issues.

What is the future we want? The peoples of the world are looking to the UN to help them achieve prosperity, equity, freedom, dignity and peace beyond 2015. And, as you may know, a global conversation has begun about how to define a concrete sustainable development framework that embodies these bold, ambitious and universal values.

How does this relate to e-governance? It is our firm belief that without public administration reform and modernization, realizing a better future for all will be extremely difficult. Where capable institutions are lacking, governments are incapacitated, and where governments are incapacitated, sustainable development falls short. It is that simple. And because technological innovation – especially information and communications technology – underpins institutional transformation in the modern age, e- governance leaders have a critical role to play in the development process.

Thanks to your efforts, institutional strengthening continues to occur in most countries, sometimes at a very rapid pace. The advances we note in online service delivery around the world each year are cause for celebration.

Governments are increasing efficiency and transparency by providing more information online, simplifying administrative procedures, streamlining bureaucratic functions and increasingly providing open government data. For example, in 2012, 70 per cent of countries provided a consolidated one-stop-shop portal compared with 26 per cent in 2003. This not only makes it easier for citizens to find public services, but it encourages governments to integrate processes across departments and increase efficiency.

Citizens and the private sector are aware of advances in e- governance. Extensive online and mobile applications, investment in advanced telecommunication infrastructure, and a regulatory environment that promotes open government while ensuring privacy and security have resulted in rates of e-government take-up exceeding 50 per cent in some of the more advanced countries.

Several governments have also been active in promoting e-participation, using the Internet to engage a much wider range of stakeholders in public policy-making than would otherwise be impossible through traditional channels. Consultative

mechanisms will be integral to governance systems of the future, and there is much to learn from the experiences of countries that have been active in this field.

Based on what we have observed and learned in countries around the world is that a whole-of-government approach is a very effective way of expanding the citizen-centric design of public service delivery.

Usage of e-government services by individuals must also continue to be promoted so that online and mobile interaction with public agencies becomes the norm. Every available service delivery channel should be explored and open government data initiatives must be expanded. These and other important concerns will be the subject of the next UN E-Government Survey.

With hindsight, the significance of the role of e- governance in sustainable development has, unfortunately, not been given due recognition and emphasis in the current development agenda on the global stage.

While we continue to take lead in our own capacities to further e-government development, I hope our consolidated effort will push for e-government to be included in the global development agenda, including the United Nations' new framework after 2015.

Thank you.

Unquote.