U N I T E D   N A T I O N S

DIVISION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
(DPADM)
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (DESA)

<u>Opening remarks</u>

Ms. Haiyan Qian, Acting Director, DPADM/UNDESA

Distinguished experts and dear colleagues,

I am pleased to welcome you to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Expert Group Meeting, "E-government Survey: Getting to the next level".

This meeting is not a stand-alone event. It is designed to improve on UNDESA's publication, "United Nations E-government Survey", which assesses the UN Member States' progress in their e-government efforts.

In order to help improve on the survey and get to the next level, I expect, firstly, that this meeting help <u>expand and improve on the existing indicators</u>.

This, by adding <u>four new sets of indicators</u> (i.e., citizen's usage of government online services, back office management in e-government, inclusiveness of e-government and mobile device usage for transacting with government) as well as <u>one updated set of indicators</u> (i.e., e-participation).

Secondly, we are expecting to benefit from experts' recommendations as to <u>how to improve the associated Survey methodology</u> (including particularly, <u>Survey questionnaire</u>).

To elaborate more, focusing on these five sets of indicators mirrors our endeavor to move beyond *supply-side* e-government measurement and *front-line* assessment of e-government activities.

(1) <u>Usage</u>

Usage indicators, for example, are not about just adding new indicators. They entail *a fundamental change of perspective from supply-side assessment of e-government*. The importance of moving beyond the well established supply side measurement is known, though it is not without difficulties. For practical purpose, our measurement has thus far relied almost entirely on web-feature based measurements; hence, focusing on supply-side availability of e-government.

A demand-side approach to e-government measurement is first of all about measuring the use of electronic services offered by the government (i.e., 'usage'). The indicators here will expand questions of the benchmarking part of the Survey to encompass the demand side (i.e., e-government take-up by citizens). Instead of just measuring the on-line availability of government service, these indicators will help measure the extent to which e-government is actually used by its citizens.

(2) <u>Back office management</u>

Another important change is embodied by an increased attention on back office management of e-government. There seems a strong link between efficient government back office and e-government experience by users. The work on back office measurement so far is limited. The newly developed sets of indicators will help assess back office processes, systems and organizational arrangement required to support efficient e-government functions and better service delivery.

Against the often fragmented landscape of governmental organizations, these indicators address (beyond ICT issues and front line service) the need for a full assessment and re-engineering of government institutions and knowledge management processes. This work is deemed essential, particularly in the light of limitation to supply-side web feature analysis that the availability of online services does not say much about internal organization of governments.

In addition to these two indicators - which will help move beyond front line and supply side measurement - I feel that there is a great need to address mobile device usage for transacting with government and digital inclusiveness, while also updating existing e-participation.

(3) <u>Mobile device usage for transacting with government</u>

This is a relatively new dimension of e-government. This dimension represents an important and rapidly growing opportunity for better public service delivery and communication. The indicators here will help identify Member States' current progress with mobile technology utilization.

(4) <u>Digital inclusiveness</u>

Without an explicit focus on inclusive e-applications, there is a danger of digital exclusion, resulting in the inequalities being exacerbated by e-government; between the "haves" and "have-nots", and particularly between privileged and marginalized groups.

(5) <u>E-participation</u>

Finally, in addition to develop these new sets of indicators, it also deems necessary to revisit e-participation indicators. Many e-participation indicators are already contained in the Survey. Yet, the idea is to improve them in response to new ways and means promoting citizens' engagement. They assess participatory aspects and tools. These are, for example, providing collaborative and communicative space, facilitating networks between citizens and government as well as among citizens, and engaging in consultations and e-decision making.

It is in this context that we are seeking your concrete inputs. Some work has already been done, and some not. To quickly give you an idea - which types of questionnaire we have already developed and which ones need to be strengthened - I would like to show you some data and graphs.

In the latest Survey 2008, there were 91 questions, and after internal review among KMB staff members over the past two years, there are now 96 questions.

It should be noted that in the new questionnaire, the number of stages have reduced five to four. Stages 1 and 2 in the old questionnaire have been merged together into the new stage 1 "Emerging Stage". In addition, in the new questionnaire, we have added 23 new questions, deleted 16 old questions and modified 29 questions. The new questionnaire seeks to strengthen stages III and IV and thus the majority of new questions added fall into the category of transactional and connected stages, which are the two-way interaction between government and citizens and e-participation respectively.

Our new questionnaire concentrates on E-participation (28), Service delivery (25), Access/Usability (25) and information dissemination/outreach (18).

Now, turning to the meeting procedure, I would like to note that given the very short duration of the meeting, we aim to make this meeting as much structured as possible. This way, the meeting deliberations can proceed in a focused and efficient manner.

On the first day, the meeting is designed as an interactive discussion based on the overview paper prepared by Mr. J. Millard, who is presently on UNDESA consultancy assignment.

I urge all experts to actively participate in the discussion sessions. Experts should present their detailed comments on the overview paper, along with own proposals for indicators and methodology.

In this context, I want to thank experts for having provided us with valuable inputs well ahead of the meeting; which contain detailed comments on the overview paper and experts' own suggestions for new and updated indicators and Survey methodology.

On the second day, the meeting will be devoted to the review of the Survey questionnaire and other associated, methodological issues. And at the end of this day, concrete deliverables are expected, which will entail recommendations for methodology and indicators.

Now, before we start with meeting discussions, let me first introduce Mr. Jeremy Millard, whose overview will frame expert discussions. Mr. Millard will also facilitate the first day meeting (and particularly, Session II).

I hope and trust that your various expertises will help us to attain concrete deliverables (i.e., four new and one updated indicators, recommendations for questionnaire and methodology); so as to improve our work on UNDESA's e-readiness survey.

The outputs of the meeting will be submitted to the UNDESA Survey team, who are present here, for consideration and incorporation in the Survey. The meeting proceedings will accordingly be published, as well.
I look forward to fruitful and constructive deliberations. Thank you.

Before giving the floor to Mr. Millard, I would like to invite you distinguished experts to introduce yourselves, with particular reference to your background and areas of expertise.