



LUNCHEON EVENT

“Building inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies through digital government Launch of 2018 UN E-Government Survey” in Asia and the Pacific

Date: 30 August 2018 (Wed) 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Venue: Conference room 1, United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Bangkok

Objective

As noted in the foreword of Mr. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, in the 2018 edition of the UN E-Government Survey, “Digital government has ushered in significant and enduring changes in the way people live and interact with each other, their environment, and public services. The 2018 Survey highlights a persistent positive global trend towards higher levels of e-government development. It examines how digital technologies and innovations are impacting the public sector and changing people’s everyday lives.”¹

With its overarching and unimaginable reach, digital technologies have the potential to advance or exacerbate social inclusion, providing opportunities or challenges to the implementation of “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” ([A/RES/70/1](#)), adopted by all countries at the United Nations in September 2015. Connectivity and access to new technologies, however, remain elusive for some regions and countries, especially the most vulnerable, including in the Asia and Pacific region, and among the small island developing States (SIDS). In addition, there is a need to consider the inherent new and unprecedented risks such as cybersecurity risks.

Contributing to the global report, the UN’s Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) highlights that the use of information and communications technology (ICT) during all phases of disaster risk management presents substantial opportunities to reduce disaster risks, enhance coping capabilities, and provide inclusive preparedness and response. Several regional cases studies in the global survey illustrate the importance of integrating emerging innovations in digital technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI), social media, space applications and geospatial information for e-resilience efforts. The report also reiterates the urgency of embracing e-resilience in e-government initiatives to ensure undisrupted services and information to citizens before, during and after disasters.

¹ Available online at <https://publicadministration.un.org/en/Research/UN-e-Government-Surveys>

Asia-Pacific is among the world's most disaster-impacted regions prompting governments to step-up disaster risk reduction efforts through digital connectivity and innovations. Digitally-driven emerging frontier technologies, such as AI, are expected to offer unparalleled levels of data availability, insights and coping capabilities to support countries address this formidable challenge and advance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Broadband connectivity for all remains critical to the success of e-governance. Towards this end, ESCAP continues to support the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) initiative to seamlessly increase the regional availability, affordability and resilience of broadband networks as a platform for e-resilience.

The primary objective of this side event is to bring government officials, experts, practitioners and other stakeholders at the Second Session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology & Science, Technology and Innovation, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to discuss how governments can tap on digital technologies for building inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies, and ensuring social inclusion and leaving no one behind. It aims to allow a joint reflection and dialogue, leading to specific recommendations, including public policies relevant to the Asia and Pacific region, to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and targets by effectively leveraging e-government and digital technologies. It is expected that the discussion outcomes would be connected to prior and future, and both UN and non-UN, fora/events on similar subject of digital government and e-resilience. Guiding questions are as follow:

- What are the current global trends of digital government development? How similar or different are the trends in the Asia and Pacific region?
- What would it take to mobilize transformative potentials of digital government to build inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies? What are the opportunities, risks and challenges moving forward especially in context of the Asia and Pacific region?
- How can governments engage non-government actors in strengthening the impact of digital governments? What is the responsibility of the private sector and how can it be mobilised? What is the role of civil society, scientists and experts?
- What is the role of the UN agencies in mobilising digital government to implement the Sustainable Development Goals? How can we step up efforts to share and adapt digital technologies and policy innovation among countries according to their specific needs?

Programme

Date/Time: Thursday, 30 Aug 2018, 1200-1320 hrs

Venue: Conference room 2, United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Bangkok

Organizers

The event is co-organized by (i) Digital Government Branch (DGB), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), DPIDG, UN DESA; (ii) Information and Communications Technology and Development Section (IDS), Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)