Foreword

Mobile phones are becoming the most rapidly adopted technology in history and the most popular and widespread personal technology in the world. Additionally, they play an increasingly important role in providing access to the Internet. Access to mobile networks is available to 90% of the world population, and to 80% of the population living in rural areas, according to the ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database; and among OECD countries mobile broadband subscriptions grew at a compounded annual growth rate of 20% between 2007 and 2009, according to the OECD Communications Outlook 2011.

Given this unparalleled advancement of mobile communication technologies, governments are turning to m-government to realise the value of mobile technologies for responsive governance and measurable improvements to social and economic development, public service delivery, operational efficiencies and active citizen engagement. The interoperability of mobile applications, which support quick access to integrated data and location-based services, paves the way for innovative public sector governance models – also called mobile governance or m-governance – based on the use of mobile technology in support of public services and information delivery.

This report highlights the critical potential of mobile technologies for improved public governance, as well as for economic and social progress in achieving the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report also provides an in-depth analysis of the prerequisites for m-government, its main benefits and challenges, the value-chain and key stakeholders, and the checklist of concrete actions to sustain policy makers in monitoring and updating their knowledge on m-government.

Whether it is an electronic wallet card linked to a mobile phone in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, or the Philippines; voting, registration or election monitoring in Morocco, Kenya, Estonia and Ukraine; support for farmers with weather forecast information and market price alerts in Malaysia, Uganda, India and China; or co-ordination of real-time location data for emergency response in Turkey, the United States and France, mobile

technologies are enhancing dynamic interactions between citizens and government, creating further opportunities for open and transparent government.

M-Government: Mobile Technologies for Responsive Governments and Connected Societies is a unique report. It is the result of the joint work of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). Recognising the ubiquity of public good governance principles, and the existence of opportunities and challenges commonly shared by governments worldwide, these three organisations aim to offer a call for action to all member countries to be strategic in moving ahead in implementing m-visions that drive public sector change and strengthen its good governance.

Mr. Sha Zukang
Under-Secretary-General
DESA

Dr Hamadoun I. Touré
Secretary General
ITU

Mr. Angel Gurría
Secretary General
OECD