

# WSIS Forum 2018

19-23 March 2018, Geneva, Switzerland

## Concept Note

### Aligning ICT and E-Government Strategies with National Development Strategies

Facilitation Meeting for Action Lines<sup>1</sup> C1, C7 eGov, C11

22 March 2018, Thursday

11:00H-13:00H

#### Background

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and e-Government Strategies are symbiotic enablers of sustainable development. Together, when designed with this purpose in mind, ICT and e-government strategies have the potential to increase productivity, stimulate economic growth and reduce poverty. Their effective use can improve government processes, effectiveness of public service delivery and strengthen accountability. But ICTs and e-government strategies also have the potential to ensure that no one is left behind in pursuing the SDGs. They can also build resilience amongst those in vulnerable situations and reduce exposure to economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

The 2030 Agenda specifically recognizes the vital role of ICTs as a catalyst for realizing its vision and states that “the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness have great potential to accelerate human progress, bridge the digital divide, develop knowledge societies such as scientific and technological innovation across areas as diverse as medicine and energy”<sup>2</sup>. The 169 targets contain four direct references to ICTs. The Agenda does not go into details on mobilizing ICT realizing the SDGs.

Ideally, national strategies and plans to implement the SDGs could indicate how ICT will be mobilized to reach the SDGs. ICT and e-government strategies could likewise be expected to support national SDG implementation strategies and plans. National development strategies do not usually appear to feature the ICTs prominently. During the 2017 High-level Political Forum, the main platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States did not often refer to ICTs and e-government in their national voluntary reviews. In the outcome document of the HLPF 2017<sup>3</sup>, ICTs are referenced on two occasions. Paragraph 18 mentions ICT’s impact on transportation, electricity; water etc., in order to emphasize the role

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) through the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) serves as facilitator for the implementation of and follow-up to the action lines:

C1-The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

C7- ICT Applications: E-government

C11- International and regional cooperation

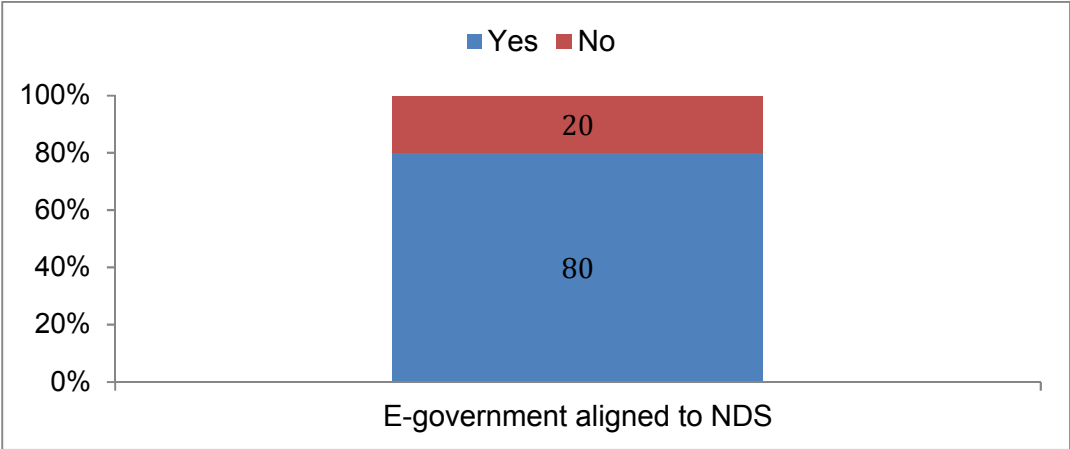
<sup>2</sup> UN DESA- Digital Skills 2Feb 2018 report

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLS/2017/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLS/2017/1&Lang=E)

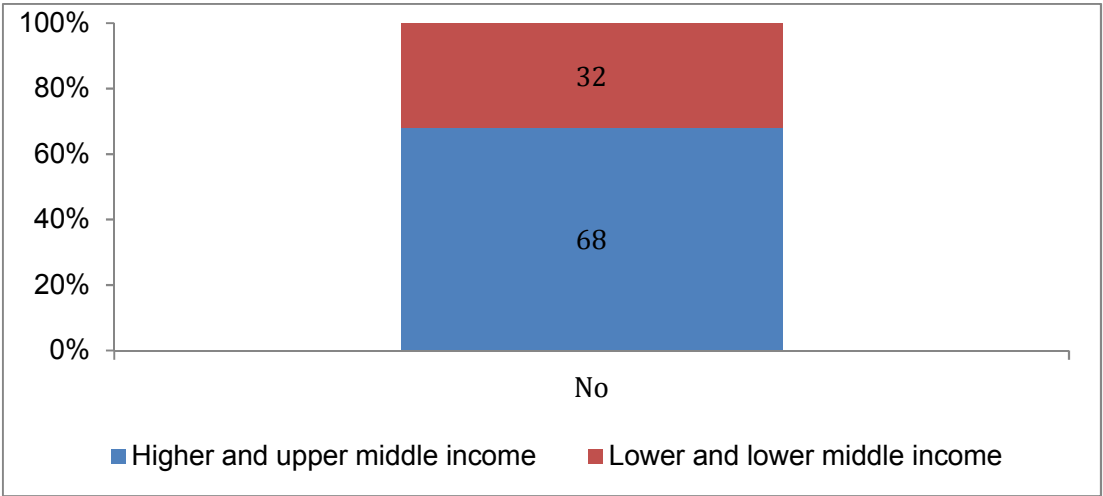
of infrastructure, industry and innovation for development. Second, paragraph 22 highlighted ICTs as a tool to harness the potential of science, technology and innovation for development.

Preliminary results from a UNDESA Survey<sup>4</sup> show that 20 per cent of the member states indicated that they do not have an e-government strategy that is aligned with their national development strategy<sup>5</sup> (Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1: E-government alignment with national development strategies**



**Figure 2: Analysis of level Income for countries with aligned e-government strategies and national development strategies**



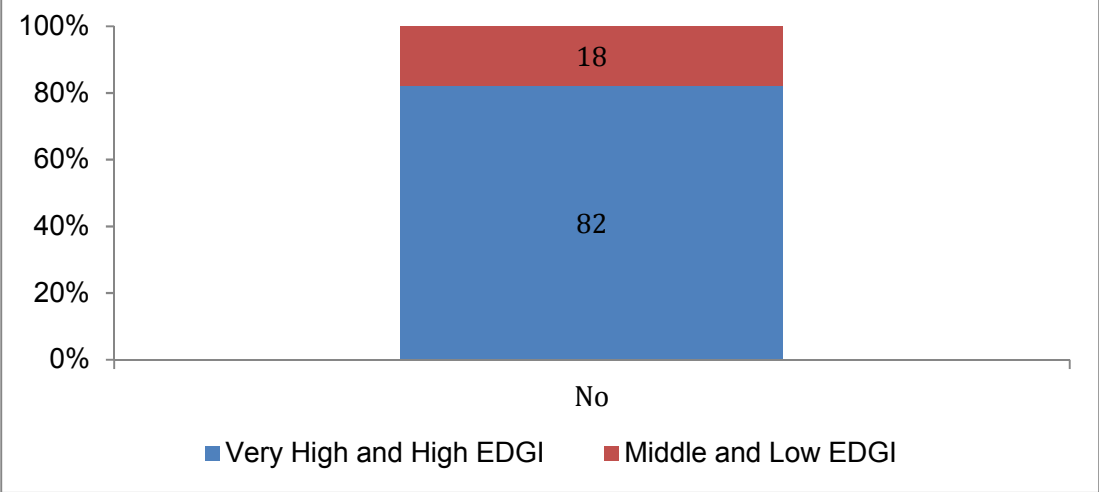
Survey results further show that the poorer countries are slightly less likely to have aligned ICT and e-government strategies within national development strategies. As Figure 2 above indicates, high and upper middle-income countries represent 68 per cent of those countries whereas lower middle and low-income countries represent 32 per cent of countries that have aligned their

<sup>4</sup> Member States Questionnaire (MSQ) that was sent out to UN Member States in 2017 for preparation of the UN E-Government Survey 2018

<sup>5</sup> 77 out of 98 countries stated that they align e-government strategy with national development strategies

national development and e-government strategies. Finally, Figure 3 indicates that of those countries that have aligned their e-government and national development strategies have a higher e-government development index (EGDI).

**Figure 3: Analysis of e-government rankings for those countries that have alignment**



These preliminary findings highlight the need for a dialogue at the UN on aligning ICT and e-government strategies with national development strategies to ensure that countries, especially those that are already behind, can build resilient and sustainable societies. It should be noted that ICT and e-government strategies also need to be supportive of other critical strategies such as those related to managing shocks and natural disasters.

Governments have the critical responsibility to pursue policies and measures to build resilience and assist those most affected by shocks in achieving SDGs. They must find ways to anticipate disasters and shocks and lower their impact. They need to manage emergency responses, seamlessly perform essential functions and deliver services, and recover rapidly from crisis situations and feedback lessons learned into their institutions and public administrations. Digital technologies are increasingly being used by governments to improve the response to disasters and other shocks to improve the resilience of communities. Whether Geographic Information Systems (GIS), open data, e-government services, or cutting-edge and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence or blockchain, they can serve as a means for improving both resilience and emergency response. The *2018 UN E-Government Survey* will address those issues.

## **Objective**

This session will focus on how governments can better incorporate ICT and e-government strategies within their National Development Strategies to reap the benefits of these technologies in building resilience and sustainable development.

Representatives of governments and other stakeholders will present best practices and challenges within their spheres of influence. This will be followed by responses from other speakers in the panel, and an interactive dialogue among meeting participants.

The relevant discussion and outcomes arising from this meeting may be included in the final publication of the *2018 UN E-Government Survey*. The outcome of the meeting is also expected to feed into the 2018 High-Level Political Forum with overall theme “*Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies*”.

## **Suggested questions for discussion**

- How can governments ensure that their ICT strategies supports their National Development Strategies?
- What challenges do governments face in integrating ICT strategies and National Development Strategies? What are some solutions to these problems? What are critical action points?
- How can governments engage other stakeholders in this integration process such as private sector and civil society?
- How can we measure integration of ICTs and e-Government in National Development Strategies?

## **Moderator**

Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

## **Speakers/Panelists**

Ministers, high level officials or other policy makers from ministries of, planning, technology, sustainable development and public administration who can highlight linkages between overall development plans and ICT and e-Government Strategies. Relevant UN agencies, private sector, civil society and other stakeholders.