Concept Note

Digital Government Transformation Webinar:
Driving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African
Union Agenda 2063

Date: 30 April 2024

Time: *21:00-22:30 (Seoul Time); 15:00-16:30 (Nairobi Time), 08:00-9:30 (New York Time)*

Registration Zoom Link: https://tinyurl.com/5n7endjm

Venue: Online

Organized by

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through

the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) and its project office - United

Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG)

and

The African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM)

Digital government transformation plays a pivotal role in advancing both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063. By harnessing digital technologies, governments can enhance service delivery, promote transparency, and foster citizen engagement, thus contributing to the achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the aspirations of Agenda 2063. Through initiatives such as e-governance, open data platforms, and digital inclusion programs, countries are enabled to bridge the digital divide, empower marginalized communities, and drive economic growth. Digital transformation enables governments to address key challenges outlined in both agendas, such as poverty alleviation, healthcare accessibility, education quality, and environmental sustainability. Likewise, digital government initiatives contribute to building effective, accountable, and resilient public institutions capable of effectively responding to emerging challenges and opportunities in the digital age. Leveraging digital innovations is therefore essential for building resilient societies and accelerating progress towards a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future.[1,2]

Digital government transformation is now more crucial for governments worldwide than ever. It offers new ways to improve efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness in the public sector. Digital transformation is revolutionizing how businesses, governments, and societies operate globally, and Africa is no different. Africa is undergoing rapid digital transformation, fueled by growing internet access, widespread mobile technology use, and a tech-savvy young population. This presents a valuable chance to tackle long-standing issues and leapfrog traditional development stages. Digital technology can drive innovation, economic growth, and job creation in many key sectors of the economy and allows for greater interconnection of African markets with one another and with the rest of the world. It can enhance both market and financial access and inclusion for all, particularly in marginalized areas neglected by traditional financial institutions.[3] Despite significant progress, the digital divide remains a major hurdle. Sub-Saharan Africa faces critical challenges for digital development, including underdeveloped digital infrastructure, lack of accessible and affordable connectivity, a difficult digital gender gap, limited skills for digitally enabled industries, and inadequate regulatory and policy environments.[4] The lack of skilled experts in new technologies slows down the successful use- and setup of digital tools. Plus, complicated, and varying rules and regulations across African countries can make it hard to smoothly bring in digital technology.

The 2022 e-Government Survey reaffirms the importance of digital transformation and digital government for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, inclusivity in the era of digital society and addressing global problems, including the recent health crisis. It also demonstrates that digital technologies assist governments in providing essential public services under conditions of unpredictability. E-government emerges as a cornerstone for fostering accountable, resilient, and inclusive institutions as outlined in SDG 16 while also bolstering the implementation of Goal 17. Leveraging information and telecommunications technology for engaging citizens in public decision-making and service delivery is integral to e-government's framework. Digital government transformation is not just about technologies. It is, above all, about public governance transformation and innovation as part of a country's overall national development vision and strategy. Developing capacities for digital government transformation is essential and requires a holistic approach that is value-driven and institutionalized across all levels of government and society. For the effective design and implementation of a holistic approach to digital government transformation, broad capacity development is needed at the institutional, organizational, and individual levels. Digital government transformation should be integrated into a country's development strategy and aligned with the SDGs as a

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[1] United Nations (n.d.). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda
[2] African Union (n.d.). Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want Available at : https://au.int/Agenda2063/popular_version
[3] G7 France (2019). Digital Transformation in Africa. Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/40535/annex-2-digital-transformation-in-africa.pdf
[4] World Bank (2024). Digital Transformation Drives Development in Africa. Available at: https://shorturl.at/ivxO1

comprehensive framework to help promote effective, accountable, and inclusive digital government.[5]

II. Artificial Intelligence in Africa

In a recent landmark decision, the UN General Assembly on 21 March 2024 adopted resolution A/78/L.49 on the promotion of "safe, secure and trustworthy" artificial intelligence (AI) systems that will also benefit sustainable development for all. The General Assembly recognized AI systems' potential to accelerate and enable progress towards reaching the 17 SDGs. The Assembly also urged all States, the private sector, civil society, research organizations and the media, to develop and support regulatory and governance approaches and frameworks related to safe, secure, and trustworthy use of AI. The Assembly urged Member States and stakeholders to cooperate with and support developing countries so they can benefit from inclusive and equitable access, close the digital divide, and increase digital literacy.[6]

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming various sectors across Africa, ushering in a new era of innovation and efficiency. In recent years, AI has gained significant momentum in Africa, driven by advancements in technology, increased digitization, and a growing emphasis on leveraging data for decision-making. From healthcare and agriculture to finance and governance, AI applications are revolutionizing processes, enhancing service delivery, and fostering economic growth. African governments have embraced AI technologies, adopting tools and solutions that reflect their socio-economic realities and aspirations. AI is discussed in African countries in the context of public sector reform, education and research, national competitiveness, and partnerships with tech companies. According to the 2023 Global AI Index, an index which ranks AI performance based 3 indicators; investment, innovation, and implementation, on a scale of 1- 100, Egypt is ranked highest in the continent with a score of 17 out of 100, with the USA leading with an impressive 100/100.[7]

II. Objectives of the Webinar

The Webinar will focus on African countries aiming to share knowledge and promote interaction between participants and practitioners from the UN system and other organizations. The overarching objective is to explore concrete action-oriented steps towards digital government transformation for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

Specific Objectives:

1. Raise awareness about the role of digital transformation in driving economic growth, improving public service delivery, and fostering innovation across various sectors in Africa.
2. Provides a platform to share insights, case studies, and good/innovative practices from successful digital government transformation initiatives within Africa and globally to advance the SDGs and aspirations of Agenda 2063.
3. Identify challenges faced in implementing digital government transformation initiatives in Africa, such as infrastructure limitations, skills gaps, regulatory barriers, and cybersecurity concerns and explore solutions.
4. Empower participants by providing them with actionable insights, tools, and resources to embark on their digital transformation journeys effectively.

5 United Nations (2022). UN e-Government Survey 2022. The Future of Digital Government. Available at: https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2022
6 United Nations (2024). General Assembly Landmark Resolution on AI https://shorturl.at/vxNWX
7 Tortoise (n.d.). The Global AI Index. Available at: https://www.tortoisemedia.com/intelligence/global-ai/

III. Expected Outcomes

By the end of the Webinar:

1. Participants would have gained a deeper understanding of the concepts, benefits, and challenges associated with digital government transformation.
2. The webinar would have facilitated the sharing of innovative and good practices, case studies, and lessons learned from successful digital transformation initiatives.
3. It would have led to measurable impacts, such as increased adoption of digital technologies, improved access to digital services, enhanced digital skills and literacy.
4. It would have informed the development of policies, strategies, and frameworks that support digital transformation agendas.

IV. Structure and Methodology

The webinar will consist of presentations, innovative case study presentations by experts, and interactive Q&A discussion sessions. The presentation and interactive discussions will enable participants to gain in-depth learning into concepts, approaches, and practice and to explore action-oriented steps towards Digital Government Transformation for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

V. Target Participants

The Digital Transformation Webinar welcomes all participants. The programme will be impactful to: Policy makers, Public Sector, Private Sector, Practitioners, Researchers, NGOs, and all other stakeholders from national government, civil society organizations and institutions engaged in promoting digital government transformation.

VI. Registration Deadline

Interested participants are requested to kindly register through the link: *https://tinyurl.com/5n7endjm*

DRAFT AGENDA

Time 15:00-16:30 (Kenya Time)	Tuesday, 30 April, 2024
15:00-15:10	**Opening Session** **Moderator: *Mr. Samuel Danaa,*** *Associate Capacity Development Expert, United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA) (1min)*
	Opening Remarks ● **Ms. Hyeyoung Kim,** *Head of UN Project Office on Governance, DPIDG/UN DESA, Incheon, Republic of Korea (3 mins)* ● **Prof. George Scott,** *Secretary General, AAPAM, Nairobi, Kenya (3 mins)* **Keynote Speaker** ● **Prof Oliver Saasa,** *Managing Consultant, Premium Consultant, Zambia (3 mins)*
	Photo Session
15:10-15:50	**Session 1 – Strengthening Digital Government Transformation to Drive the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and African Union Agenda 2063**
15:10-15:50	**Moderator: *Dr. John Mary- Kauzya,*** *Stellenbosch University, South Africa*
	Presentations: ▪ **Hon. Amara Kallon,** *Minister of Public Service and Political Affairs, Sierra Leone (10 mins) (tbc)* ▪ **Dr. Prof. Saleh Elsheikh,** *President, Central Agency for Organization and Administration (CAOA), Egypt (10 mins) (tbc)* ▪ **Mr. Sungsoo Kim,** *Director General, Ministry of the Interior and Safety, Republic of Korea **(**10 mins) (tbc)* ▪ **Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro,** *Chief, Digital Government Branch (DGB), DPIDG/UN DESA. (10 mins)*
15:50-16:25	**Session 2 – Panel Discussion**
15:50-16:25	**Moderator: *Dr. John Mary- Kauzya,*** *Stellenbosch University, South Africa*
	Panel Discussion - *Challenges, Opportunities, Strategies, and Policy Recommendations for driving Digital Government Transformation in Africa* ▪ **All Speakers –** *(Hon. Amara Kallon, Dr. Prof. Saleh Elsheikh, Mr. Sungsoo Kim, and Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro)* **(***15 mins)* **Q&A and Discussion Session (20 mins)**
16:25-16:28	**Closing Remarks** ● **Prof. George Scott,** *Secretary General, AAPAM, Nairobi, Kenya (3 mins)*
16:28-16:30	**Post-event Survey and Wrap-up of the Workshop**

UN DESA/DPIDG

- ▪ *Mr. Juwang Zhu, Director, DPIDG/UN DESA*
- ▪ *Ms. Adriana Alberti, Chief, Programme Management and Capacity Development Unit, DPIDG/UN DESA*

UN DESA/DPIDG/UNPOG

- ▪ *Ms. Hyeyoung Kim, Head, United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG)/DPIDG/UN DESA*
- ▪ *Ms. Ana Thorlund, Governance and Public Administration Expert, UNPOG/DPIDG/UN DESA, thorlund@un.org*
- ▪ *Mr. Samuel Danaa, Associate Capacity Development Expert, UNPOG, danaasamuel17@gmail.com*

AAPAM

- ▪ *Mr. George Scott, Secretary General, AAPAM, Nairobi, Kenya*
- ▪ *Ms. Julie Muia, Programs Officer, AAPAM, Nairobi, Kenya, julie@aapam.org; aapam@aapam.org*