Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Public Administration and Development Management

e-Government and New Technologies: Towards better citizen engagement for development

Report of the Expert Group Meeting

Expert Group Meeting
e-Government and New Technologies: Towards better citizen engagement for development

13-14 May 2010
Geneva, Switzerland

United Nations
New York, 2011

DESA

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations draw to review common problems and to take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint course of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

Note

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The designations "developed" and "developing" economics are intended for statistical convenience and do not necessarily imply a judgment about the state reached by a particular country or area in the development process.

The term "country" as used in the text of this publication also refers, as appropriate, to territories or areas.

The term "dollar" normally refers to the United States dollar ($).

The views expressed are those of the individual authors and do not imply any expression of opinion on the part of the United Nations.

Contents

Acknowledgments

Foreword

Community and citizen participation in the implementation of programmes and projects is a critical element of strengthening local, national and regional communities and increasing the bonds and restoring trust between governments, service providers and citizens. Traditionally, e-government has focused on facilitating communication and improving the coordination of authorities at different tiers of government, within organizations and even at the departmental level. Furthermore, it has been proven that e-government can enhance the speed and efficiency of operations by streamlining processes, lowering costs, improving research capabilities and improving documentation and record-keeping.

An important mission and as a response to the demands of nations to find options and institutions that strengthen public governance, as well as to explore initiatives that support implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations has embarked on a programme of work for linking citizens firmly to various aspects of participatory governance. Towards this effort, DESA in collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) organized a multiple stakeholders Expert Group Meeting on *"e-Government and New Technologies: Towards better citizen engagement for development."* The meeting was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 13 to 14 May 2010 in conjunction with the Forum 2010 on implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Over 25 experts and key staff from among 20 nations provided both presentations and interactive dialog during the event. The meeting reviewed and analyzed approaches and best practices in understanding what constitutes citizen engagement and e-government, related policies and programmes in the context of good governance and MDGs implementation.

The meeting also focused on the issues and challenges countries face as they advance in developing their citizen engagement and e-government programmes for improved communications and accelerated e-participation given these attributes have the potential for drawing disadvantaged groups into the workings of governance. It generated discussions on the transfer and exchange of ideas on citizen engagement through ICT for development including social media networks and e/m-applications, as well as address issues of knowledge management and capacity-building within the ambit of public administration. This meeting provided the opportunity to bring together a multidisciplinary international group to further evolve the philosophical framework for the assessments of citizen engagement worldwide.

Haiyan Qian
Director
Division for Public Administration and Development Management
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Executive Summary

The expert meeting began with reviewing the global perspective from many different angles. There was common agreement that the definitions governing e-government and citizen engagement were important so as to establish a baseline of common thought and deliberation. The expert group began its discussion with looking at why governments are now on the path towards moving beyond e-government and towards greater citizen engagement. A crisis of trust between citizens and governments was believed to be at an all-time low among democratic institutions. The evolutionary trend to move beyond e-government and embrace citizen engagement is a move from administrative conveniences to actual participatory democracy. Only when we fully understand the scope and depth of the "why" we can begin to delve into the "how".

This report attempts to summarize two intense days of meetings by experts from across the globe. Much of the content is taken directly from many of the expert presentations and each presentation that was submitted is included in the appendix. While this report will summarize each of the five sessions, there were a number of recurring themes which can be summarized as follows:

1. Citizens will seek new forms of on-line accountability, transparency, and improved delivery of public administration services.

2. Governments as well as their citizens will enjoy many positive benefits in further expanding and implementing citizen engagement opportunities through web-based applications.

3. Governments will continue to experiment with new e-government applications.

4. Technology innovations will make it easier and less expensive to deploy new e-government services.

5. Mobile government (m-government) will see dramatic growth through the increased use of smart phones and other mobile devices.

6. Governments recognize the need for greater innovation and experimentation with new mobile applications.

7. Governments recognize the need for managing expectations among its citizens and public administrators.

8. Governments recognize the need for training and development among their staff and public administrators.

9. Governments must also ensure that the input of a few, however well-intentioned, can never replace the will of the many. Systems and safeguards will need to ensure that a "digital mob scene" is no substitution for democratic values and institutions.

10. More research into best practices in regards to technology applications, training and citizen satisfaction is needed.

11. Greater attention needs to focus on developing nations in regards to broadband availability and emerging technologies.

12. While technology continues to evolve and improve public administrators must recognize the limits to what technology can and cannot provide, recognizing both pitfalls as well as opportunities.

13. There are serious limitations to e-participation in assuring true representative opinions from among all sectors of a given population.

Introduction

Background

Citizen engagement has become an important governance norm for our times because it can strengthen the planning and decision-making process at all levels of government and invigorate accountability, transparency and the delivery of services in a democratic environment. Many institutions including the United Nations and its key agencies believe that quality consultation and engagement of stakeholders at all levels are essential foundations of good governance. With effective communication, dialogue and increased involvement, governments and organizations, authorities and service providers are in a better position to make informed decisions about issues that affect the international, regional and national community and markets in which they participate.

Community and citizen participation in the implementation of programmes and projects is a critical element of strengthening local, national and regional communities and increasing the bonds between governments, service providers and citizens. Currently, the industrialized nations are advancing the notion of greater government transparency and citizen engagement as a tool is a critical undertaking in order to maintain social order - regardless of type of governance. While e-government initiatives in developing countries has been constrained by lack of technological infrastructure, financial resources and public administration capacity, new advances in programmes and technologies may contribute to overcoming many of these barriers.

Traditionally, e-government has focused on facilitating communication and improving the coordination of authorities at different tiers of government, within organizations and even at the departmental level. Furthermore, it has been proven that e-government can enhance the speed and efficiency of operations by streamlining processes, lowering costs, improving research capabilities and improving documentation and record-keeping.

However, there is a relatively new emphasis that goes beyond the internal workings of e-government, where processes and technologies can directly engage the citizen with greater information and improve transparency, accountability and participation. Research shows a dramatic increase in mobile telephony around the world, which includes developing nations. The devices themselves are becoming smarter and feature-rich with major advances coming to market each year. Social media platforms, originally designed for personal use, are now being embraced by national and local governments across the globe. Popular social network sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter now contain the tools for citizen engagement features and opportunities.

Against this background where innovation opportunities abound, there is both a need and an opportunity to share best practices and explore ways governments and citizens can be better connected for efficient public administration. Further, governments will be able to take better advantage of new applications as well as study what is involved by way of training, capacity building, knowledge management and resource planning.

This raises key questions that involve policies regarding who can participate, what kind of policies and procedures can best support a dynamic system, as well as how government staff and citizens are trained to properly acquire such skills as participation management; transformation participation into substance for policy inputs and development accreditation strategies for civil society.

An important mission and as a response to the demands of nations to find options and institutions that strengthen public governance, as well as to explore initiatives that support implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations has embarked on a programme of work for linking citizens firmly to various aspects of participatory governance. In recent decades, several major United Nations summits, resolutions and international declarations have focused on the themes of participation and partnership in a wide range of international issues, including Sustainable and Economic Development, Crime Prevention and the Status of Women, Action for Peace and Science and Technology for Development, Public Administration and Development, and Development in Africa. Several of these resolutions concentrate specifically on the need for more participatory approaches to governance, focusing on partnerships among multiple stakeholders at both the national and international levels, including national governments, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, media and the private sector.

Towards this effort, UNDESA and ITU organized a multiple stakeholders Expert Group Meeting on "e-Government and New Technologies: Towards Better Citizen Engagement for Development" which took place in Geneva, Switzerland on 13 and 14 May 2010. The meeting reviewed and analyzed approaches and best practices aimed at better understanding what constitutes citizen engagement and e-government, related policies and programmes in the context of good governance and MDGs implementation. It also characterized how citizen engagement and e-government can best be applied for good governance in countries worldwide.

The meeting also focused on the issues and challenges countries face as they advance in developing their citizen engagement and e-government programmes for improved communications and accelerated e-participation given these attributes have the potential for drawing disadvantaged groups into the workings of governance. The event also focused on the transfer and exchange of ideas from stakeholders to further discussions on citizen engagement through ICT for development, including social media networks and e-gov/mobile-applications, as well as addressing issues of knowledge management and capacity-building

within the ambit of public administration. This Meeting provided an opportunity to bring together a multidisciplinary and international group to help further evolve the philosophical framework for the assessment of citizen engagement worldwide.

Objectives

The goal of the Meeting was to further the thinking of the United Nations and multiple stakeholders on how citizen engagement and ministry capacity building for e-government in developing and developed countries can help accelerate economic growth and citizen satisfaction leading to good governance. The Meeting explored and identified issues and challenges facing governments and citizens, civil society and the private sector in their quest for greater citizen engagement and MDGs implementation through the utilization of the latest technologies.

The Meeting also helped to identify the major issues and trends in citizen engagement within e-government with the goal of improving effective and efficient planning, decision making, implementing, and monitoring and evaluation process of all levels of government. The meeting explored ways of citizen engagement towards invigorating accountability, transparency and the delivery of services as well as the role of social media applications by reviewing existing approaches worldwide and analyzing the structural and process changes associated with current e-government development. The experts presented papers and held meaningful discussions on the themes outlined in this summary report.

The Meeting was organized with the following objectives in mind:

- Review current research, including policies, concepts and approaches of citizen engagement and e-government for good governance and MDGs implementation;
- Explore the challenges and barriers to effective citizen engagement in developing and developed countries;
- Assess existing the role and perspectives of e/m applications and social media networks for better citizen engagement and MDGs implementation in various regions and countries;
- Map innovative approaches, best practices and lessons learned of citizen engagement tools and applications for better public administration and MDGs implementation and explore reasons for their success and failure.

In addition to the opening plenary session, there were five thematic sessions over the two days on selected topics on citizen engagement for good governance. Each session included presentations followed by general discussions. Thematic areas for presentation include the following:

- Plenary: The Macro view of e-Government: The why & how for good governance through citizen engagement.

- Session I: New technologies & citizen engagement: Practices and impacts from country cases
- Session II: New technologies & citizen engagement: Government strategies, perspectives and capacities for change
- Session III: New technologies & citizen engagement: Perspectives of non-government stakeholders
- Session IV: New technologies & citizen engagement: Strategies and capacity building for knowledge management
- Session V: Creating an Action Agenda for better citizen engagement through ICT for development.

The final session was dedicated to a two-hour brainstorming session by experts and participants on the above thematic areas in order to identify key issues and recommendations for follow-up to the United Nations agenda on citizen engagement through ITC for development and good governance.

Participants

Participants at the Meeting included senior policy makers, experts on citizen engagement and e-government initiatives and representatives from academia, civil society, social media networks, private sector and international organizations. Overall, 25 experts and key staff provided both presentations and interactive dialog from among 20 nations during the two-day meeting (see attached list).

Plenary Session

The Macro View of e-government: The Why and How for Good Governance through Citizen Engagement

Moderator: Dr. Alan R. Shark, Executive Director, Public Technology Institute, Washington, DC

Panelists:

- Mr. Ivo Ivanovski, Minister of Information Society (Former Republic of Macedonia)
- Dr. Hoda Baraka, First Deputy to the Minister, Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies (MCIT) (Egypt)
- Prof. Dr. Tino Schuppan, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, IfG CC, The Potsdam e-government Competence Center (Germany)
- Mr. Yury Yaroshevich, Senior Expert, Policy Analysis Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Belarus)

Experts presenting at the opening session reported on the progress to date on how e-government programmes and services are evolving in their respective countries. Each reported much progress in promoting and utilizing web-based e-government platforms. In Egypt alone, it was reported that there are already well over 6 million public domains or public Internet destinations. Along with the explosion of Internet usage generally comes the opportunity to serve greater numbers of citizens through e-government platforms. The obvious advantages that were noted were the speed of transactions, the always-on availability of getting information and making transactions such as permits and licensing, and the ability (when permissible) to gauge public opinion on certain issues. The panelists noted that there is a tremendous difference between merely providing on-line information and services as opposed to responding to specific requests or actually engaging citizens.

It was also pointed out that *e-government* and *citizen engagement* are not the necessarily the same, though they are often lumped together suggesting quite the opposite. In many cases, public administrators still lack the understanding, training, and knowledge as well as equipment necessary to best engage citizens. Many government agencies lack not only the training – but the tools, policies and resources.
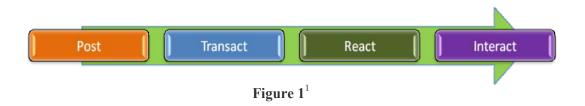
On the public side, the panel identified the need for greater digital literacy programmes that would enable citizens to better understand both the ethical underpinnings, advantages and limitations of citizen engagement through the use of on-line technology. This would include digital ethics, civic responsibilities and obligations, as well as computer literacy. They also

identified issues regarding managing citizen expectations which require an understanding of culture, civic responsibility, ethics, as well as broadband availability and adoption. The problem in most countries – both developed and developing, is the challenge of seeking meaningful ways to bridge the *haves* and *have-nots*, which have been referred to as the digital divide. Many people still suffer from the lack of accessibility, affordability, and availability of broadband access and or necessary computer equipment. Therefore, many citizens still lack the means to participate in the new and emerging connected on-line world.

Governments across the globe report increasing problems with citizens who are frustrated with their governments and there has been a continuing erosion of public trust in government institutions. Many governmental bodies have begun to provide more information about their operations in what is referred to as greater transparency. While placing greater types of information regarding government operations is key, the next critical step is providing e-government platforms that actually reach out and seek citizen input – and then acknowledge and act open it when possible.

As citizens come to expect more from their governments, governments in turn need to expect more from their citizens. This provides a number of significant challenges. E-government can be viewed as a being on a continuum of evolution. It begins with basic information that is posted, than evolved to transaction-based services, and then to the active participation (engagement) where citizens can actually weigh in on various issues.

Figure one highlights the steady evolution of e-government in the public sector.

Figure 1[1]

Panelists also identified and discussed the costs of implementation, the potential for political impact (both good and bad), social economic impact as well as the recognition that some administrative procedures and regulations may need to be changed and or modified. One example cited, was the need to accept digital signatures.

The panel urged that more be done by way of research, cataloging best practices, and the further sharing of information, review of both social media polices and technology, and finally, professional development and training at all levels of government.

---

[1] Dr. Alan Shark (Geneva 2010)

Session One: Practices and Impacts from Country Cases

Moderator: Vyacheslav Cherkasov, DPADM/DESA
Panelists:

- Mr. Jovan Kurbalija, Founding Director, Diplo Foundation, "*Can Web 2.0 facilitate Global Governance 2.0?*" (Switzerland)
- Mr. Jorge Alonso Estrada, Chief Advisor, Government of Mexico, Secretariat of Communications and Transportation, "*A citizen-driven digital agenda: e-Mexico technological platform 2010-2012*" (Mexico)
- Dr. K. Jayakumar, Joint Secretary (Admin), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Ministry of Science and Technology, "*Building Institutional Capacities for a purposive transformative change to support e-governance initiatives*" (India)
- Dr. Rowena G. Bethel, Legal Advisor, Ministry of Finance (Bahamas)
- Ms. Viola Krebs, "*Citizen engagement through cybervolunteerism: the example of E.TIC.net in Senegal and Mali*"

In session one, Dr. Kurbalija who is the founding director of the Diplo Foundation headquartered in Switzerland, focused on capacity-building and Internet governance as it pertains to public management and policy. He pointed out that the term "Governance" has many different translations and went on to question how Web 2.0 can help facilitate global governance. Dr. Kurbalija however, provided the rationale where under the right conditions Web 2.0 can most certainly help promote and facilitate greater global governance. This however, cannot occur naturally without the recognition for public management capacity building, training, and professional development programmes.

Dr. Jayakumar's presentation examined and focused on the issues that confront the necessary transformation of government agencies as well as the need for building capacity that is required for the successful implementation of e-governance projects. Some of the possible ways in which public administration can foster and engineer systemic changes to facilitate reforms in the context of implementing e-governance initiatives were also discussed.

Technology developments have propelled collaboration, facilitated partnership arrangements and paved the way for new business models to be leveraged for the implementation of e-governance initiatives. While it has become possible to harness information and communication technologies for transforming organizations and re-engineering citizen services in ways that promote the involvement of stakeholders and enhance quality of services that can be made available to the citizens, the required institutional capacities, organizational change, policies and practices have not kept pace with the requirements.

Dr. Jayakumar as well as the other expert presenters believe the challenge that is most often faced by governments is in accomplishing institutional transformations which ensures, (i) building systems and capacities in government agencies that will result in renewed processes, enhanced agility, improved quality of responsiveness and services to citizens, while such perspectives are internalized within such organizations as learnt behaviors; (ii) institutionalization of ingenious strategies, productive methods, progressive practices for persistent problem solving and for guaranteeing results; (iii) executing continuous improvements in government systems, policies, practices aligned with citizens' needs and stakeholder expectations and (iv) pursuing and implementing participative, inclusive methods to engage and leverage purposive relationships with citizens and stakeholders with a view to enhance the organizations' capacity to deliver and improve the quality of results.

The lessons from implementing e-governance initiatives need to progressively lead to evolving frameworks, models, guidelines and recommended practices that can help in resolving innumerable issues relating to strategies, models, design of interventions, mechanisms, approaches, standards and guidelines. Effective results and impact from e-government initiatives will require appropriate goal setting, creation of ownerships, building of leadership at all levels, transforming systems for delivering results, clarity in roles, responsibilities, optimal deployment of resources, incentivizing returns, change control, advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and assessment of quality of outcomes for required corrections[2].

The expert presenters discussed the need to narrow the digital divide through a variety of measures that includes leveraging infrastructure to be more accessible to citizens, developing and nurturing the human resources to design, develop and operate the new digital infrastructure. They went on to discuss the need for encouraging and building better systems that provide for greater citizen participation, and to create new information systems and solutions that provide safe and practical experiences. Other mechanisms include creating more public-private partnerships, renewing business process and re-engineering and expanding service delivery channels. All of this will require a renewed commitment to strategic vision and leadership for improved e-government services.

Ms. Viola Krebs, director of ICVolunteers (ICV) provided some excellent examples and case studies of how citizen engagement programmes are working in Senegal and Mali through the use of new technologies aimed at helping the very poorest of citizens, farmers, herders, and fishermen be able to compete and sell their products. These key economic functions comprise the essential pillar of success of African nations. These challenges have been magnified due to the high rate of illiteracy, lack of available power sources, and many have never touched a computer. Nevertheless, the ICV has worked with the local population in

---

[2] Abstract: "Building Institutional Capacities for a Purposive Transformative Change to Support e-government Initiatives, Dr. K. Jayakumar, May 2010.

helping them first identify key areas of economic concern and then studied ways of best reaching and engaging citizens.

It was essential for the local population see the benefits of selling their products through the use of technologies as well as using the same technologies to gain a better education on how the latest methods for fishing, farming, and herding.

The success of this case study can be owed in part to excellent field action research coupled with sound planning that utilizes many different electronic and print offerings.

This includes websites, community radio, written press, mobile phones – some using SMS, and creating telecenters to best reach citizens.

Throughout the expert panel presentations and discussions there were many references to e-government and the need for increased citizen engagement strategies. Some government ministers embraced the concept yet others felt their governments were totally unprepared for true citizen engagement activities. Professor Wojeich Cellary presented a challenging proposition regarding the limits of citizen engagement and managing expectations. It wasn't long ago when a community was defined by geographic boundaries and specific groups of people who might even know one another. Taken to the next level governments were essentially required to seek solutions to problems of a certain community. When a community was small as in a territory, communication was made easier, more frequent, and perhaps richer. More frequent communication usually equated to stronger relationships.

With the advent of the Internet, we now have what Professor Cellary calls "Internet Communication". With Internet communication everybody may publish his or her own information, including comments to information published by others. Information is available to everyone with access to the Internet, it can be searched individually, and this information leads to people interested in this information. We now have two forms of communities, one being "Territorial Communities" where they are impacted by the consequences of living together on a common territory. The other form of community is "Content Communities" where the communities are brought together by common content. These two communities are not the same, argues Professor Cellary.[3]

---

[3] Professor Cellary, "Non-Technical Aspects of Citizens Engagement in e-Government"

Territorial communities | Content communities

Territorial communities	Content communities
⇨ multi-aspect relationships	⇨ single aspect relationships
⇨ transitivity	⇨ non-transitivity
⇨ identity	⇨ anonymity
⇨ known past	⇨ hidden past
⇨ emerging authorities	⇨ everyone is authority for himself
⇨ following leader's views (knowledge or trust)	⇨ manifestation of distinctness
⇨ hierarchical structure	⇨ equality
⇨ difficulty in leaving a territory	⇨ easy leaving a community
⇨ common interest and common threats (long-term)	⇨ common interests (short-term)
⇨ aiming at compromise	⇨ keeping own opinions
⇨ view unification	⇨ keeping view diversity

It is important to recognize content communities on the Internet provide their members the ability to learn about a variety of views and opinions from different perspectives. And, these same communities serve rather to exhibit people's own opinions acquired elsewhere than to accept opinions of others or to unify opinions. Because opinions in an Internet community tend to be anonymous, members may lack the responsibility for one's words. This has the possibility to of changing opinions and positions, and can include unconsidered contexts and unconsidered multiple aspects of a problem. There are no incentives to even achieve consensus and there is usually a lack of hierarchy, whereas Professor Cellary puts it "A word of a fool can equal the word of a sage".

When citizen engagement is compared to what citizens are expected to do within the context of e-Government, one must take into account the serious limitations of Content Communities. This in turn drives citizen and public administrator expectations one way or another. When focusing on citizen engagement via the Internet, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of content communities since they do not necessarily represent the whole territorial community and it is much easier for them to represent negative or ill-informed positions.

Therefore, content communities may at best provide a government with a variety of partial views, but cannot exempt a government from a harmonized solution for the benefit of the whole territorial community. This is an important consideration in developing more advanced e-Government and citizen engagement systems in terms of the political shortcomings where technology today has yet to recognize.

Session Two: Government Strategies, Perspectives, and Capacities for Change

Moderator: Hani Eskandar, ITU
Panelists:
- Mr. Ionut Negrescu, Director, European Affairs and International Relations Directorate, Ministry of Information and Communications Society, *"New eRomania Strategy and Citizen Engagement"* (Romania)
- Ms. Maria Isabel Mejia-Jaramillo, General Manager on the Agenda for Connectivity and e-Government Strategy, Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, *"Best practices and lessons learnt developing and implementing a successful Government Online National Strategy"* (Colombia)
- Mr. Tomasz Janowski, Head, UNU-IIST Center for Electronic Governance - *"EGOV.* - An Action Framework for Governance 2.0"* (UNU/China)
- Ms. Prachi Sharma, CEO, Samin Tekmindz, *"Existing citizen engagement trends within e-government"* (India).

Session two showcased plans for increasing e-government and citizen engagement programmes in Romania and Colombia. The final presentation is this block was a progress report from the head of the United Nations University Center for Electronic Government.

In Romania, only 13 per cent overall or 4.2 per cent of households have access to broadband. At the same time mobile broadband is up to 2.5 million subscribers or 11 per cent of the population. The government is aware of the need to further develop the infrastructure as well as e-Government public services. Following the goals of the European Digital Agenda initiative, Romania hopes to ensure access to all broadband services by 2013. Romanian law requires that there by public comment on all new government initiatives. And every institution is responsible for the interaction with citizens and the civil society.

Today the Government of Romania is focusing on its eRomania Strategy where the main objective is reduce the time it takes for its citizens to be informed and to obtain the documents necessary to live and work in Romania and in the EU and to pay his/her duties and taxes. If all goes as planned, eRomania and will have approximately 300 on-line services by the end of 2011 with interconnection and full computerization of the Romanian government and all public institutions so that the access of citizen and of the business environment to public services should be direct and unlimited. One of the most ambitious goals, e-Romania, improves the quality of public administration and the transition from bureaucratic to a simplified public administration structure.

The government is also trying to deal head-on with the digital divide issue. Another crucial factor is to provide citizen-oriented digital services in the shortest timeframe.

However, part of the programme is the need for citizens to acquire e-skills, which implies early digital literacy, while at the same time focusing on digital literacy for the elderly. It is imperative to be aware of the increasing importance of the IT component in Romania's modern society, both in business and personal life.

For other nations following similar past political paths, it is probably quite instructive to note the fact that the Romanian citizen is not used to interact with the state institutions, except when they are obliged to do it for administrative purposes. Creating electronic services which are easy to use and with well-structured information is an objective of the Romanian government as it is the way to get the citizens closer to the government.

From the Romanian experience they have learned that the way one interacts with the press and industry, helps to shape and define the performance of the government for the citizens. Romania, by its own admission, is nota best practice example in e-government as of yet. Until recently, they lacked the political will to enforce measures needed to implement electronic services. As one of many lessons learned, strong political support from the top officials of the country (President and Prime-Minister) is needed in order to develop these services.

Looking back to the past the Romania government today believes that if one counted the money spent for different IT solutions by the previous governments in the past 20 years they would see that they should have had all the necessary electronic services. But without a coordinated approach Romania is one of the last countries in Europe in delivering electronic services to the citizen.

One of the major obstacles the government is trying to overcome is access to the data bases owned by the different institutions of the Romanian state. (For example there is a need to access the database with the Unique Identification Number administrated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs). Because they believe that access to the database will mean decreasing their influence, institutions like the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Finance are first to reject any coordinated approach.

Strong cooperation with the civil society and the industry is needed to promote a national project in e-government. In the Romanian case the government initially concentrated on developing a climate of positive cooperation with industry and the part of the civil society interested in information society issues.

In the end however, it was a mistake, as once eRomania was announced they received a lot of critics for not being transparent with the project.

The following summarizes some key points:

1. It is necessary for countries such as Romania, or for the developing countries to implement e-government services. The implementation of these services contributes to the MDGs, reduces the administrative costs, thus leading to a   better engagement of citizens in the government act.

2. The investment in the electronic services must be made in parallel with the development of a modern telecommunications infrastructure.

3. The cooperation with the local industry is essential in developing good   electronic services. Thematic working groups should be created prior to proposing a national strategy and afterwards to follow the implementation.

4. Excellent cooperation with the civil society and the press is necessary in order   to promote a project. It is important to present all the benefits of a potential change, before launching debates on a law proposition or a project. Electronic services are a solution to better present the initiatives of the government and interact with the citizens.

5. Special attention must be paid to eSkills and fighting against the digital divide among the countries of the world.

Colombia shared a different experience. Colombia has embarked on a Government Online National Strategies for delivering efficient, transparent, and participative services spearheaded by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies. Like Romania, each public agency across the country is responsible for its implementation of its own e-government and participation services. The role of the Ministry is to coordinate and to provide tools to public agencies for their strategy implementation. This includes research, on-going support, transverse solutions (based on standardization and interoperability), common IT infrastructure, training plans, marketing plans, as well as to monitor and evaluation systems. To simplify, the Ministry provides many resources for coordination which include guidelines, actions plans, and follow-up activities.

Some key lessons learned include the necessity of listening to the users. Listen for their experiences, needs, and impact of the services being offered or planned. Citizens need to be aware of the online services so they can use them. This requires programmes that build awareness, then experience, and finally establishing new habits. One of their marketing campaign slogans was "Good Stories Makes for Good Experiences". The Ministry also recognized the challenges associated with the need for training public servants in different government online aspects.

As all of the expert panelists agreed throughout the two day meeting, there is a huge difference between e-government as it relates to government services and e-government as it relates to citizen participation. According to Ms. Marie Isabel Mejia-Jaramillo, giving opinions is different from participating on building or encouraging public policy and decision making. They should not only weigh in on issues – but they should expect to learn the result of their contributions.

Ms. Mejia-Jaramillo spoke about Colombia's experience with social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Each social network can be useful but one must understand how each network works. For example it is not simply enough to have a presence in a particular social

network. Each network has its own culture and user characteristics that need to be understood. There is a continuous need to monitor social network sites and be prepared to respond to citizen requests and posting, questions, etc.

The challenge for Colombia and other nations looking to improve upon their e-Government and participation programmes is to provide even more on-line experiences, continuous focus on citizen needs and preferences, actively seek citizen feed-back, ensuring data and information integrity and security, which when done correctly equates to a higher degree of trust and credibility.

Mr. Thomas Janowski presented an "Action Framework for Governance 2.0". The Center has identified six main actions of the framework:
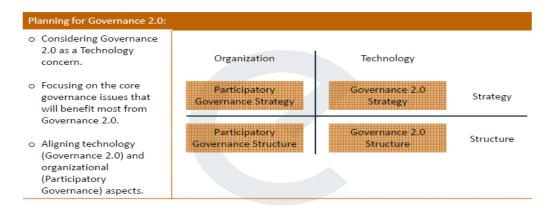
1) Readiness Assessment.

2) Research and Problem Solving.

3) Strategy Development.

4) Programme Development.

5) Human Capacity Development.

6) Organizational Capacity Development.

The UN's Center for Electronic Governance defines Web 2.0 as "Technology-enabled transformation of government organizations and their relationships with citizens, businesses and other arms of government." The "Aims" include customer orientation, business-like management, quality public services, citizens engagement and trust. The "Enablers" include processes, technology, reengineering administrative/business processes, ICT environment to support organizational change. Risks include:

1) Over-reliance on technology.

2) Inadequate public consultation.

3) Insufficient collaboration in government.

4) Lack of emphasis on building human capacity.

5) Absence internal ownership, vision or strategy.

6) Direct adoption of solutions designed for other contexts.

7) Insufficient learning and research to precede implementation.

8) Insufficient administrative reform to accompany e-Government, etc.

The Center further defines Web 2.0 as "The use of social media (Web 2.0 technologies) by governments for improving citizen access to information, participation in policy processes, delivery of customer-focused services and harnessing collective intelligence of citizens." This

includes converging with other long-term societal trends such as: empowering citizens, the rise of knowledge workers, and the importance of informal learning.[4]

Planning for Governance 2.0:

o Considering Governance 2.0 as a Technology concern.

o Focusing on the core governance issues that will benefit most from Governance 2.0.

o Aligning technology (Governance 2.0) and organizational (Participatory Governance) aspects.

	Organization	Technology	
	Participatory Governance Strategy	Governance 2.0 Strategy	Strategy
	Participatory Governance Structure	Governance 2.0 Structure	Structure

The Center provides a rather clear-cut roadmap for developing a "participatory governance and governance 2.0 progam" as seen below:

Adopting a strategy and program development framework which supports the alignment of Participatory Governance and Governance 2.0.

The process entails:

1) Developing a Governance 2.0 Strategy
2) Designing a Governance 2.0 Architecture and supporting infrastructure
3) Ensuring the existence of an explicit Participatory Governance strategy
4) Ensuring that the necessary enablers and processes for Participatory Governance are provided
5) Aligning 1 to 4

Developing Governance 2.0 strategy and program could be carried out through the EGOV.* framework.

According to the Center, despite the popularity of Governance 2.0, a number of implementation issues are coming to the fore:

- Justifying the value expected from the Governance 2.0 adoption, since unrestricted access to audio and video streams can overwhelm networks that were not designed to accommodate large volumes of such traffic in terms of bandwidth requirements and security vulnerability.
- Overcoming the perception by taxpayers and the public that the use of Web 2.0 by governments is not a legitimate government business.

In building an e-governance strategy there are many factors that need to be explored and acted upon – they must also be well coordinated.

---

[4] United Nations University, Center for Electronic Governance

1) READINESS ASSESSMENT
2) RESEARCH
3) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
4) PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
5) HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING
6) ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

EGOV.* – e-Government Development Framework

The Center concludes:

1) While it is clear that Web 2.0 and Governance 2.0 potentially provides concrete benefits in terms participation, like any technological solution, realizing these benefits is not trivial.

2) Experiences from around the world show the need for an explicit policy to shape the form and scope of Governance 2.0 adoption.

3) Strategic alignment between Governance 2.0 strategy (technology strategy) Governance strategy (organizational strategy) is critical for concrete outcomes and participatory.

4) While there are already exciting opportunities provided by the existing Web 2.0 tools, more opportunities particularly for the public sector lie in automatic processing of the huge amounts of data provided by citizens on social media, through the integration across social media applications and mining valuable information from these data to support policy decisions.

5) A concrete approach to implementing Governance 2.0 is the EGOV.* framework.[5]

---

[5] EGO V*-An action Framework for Governance 2.0 (UNO)

Session Three: Perspectives of Non-Government Stakeholders

Moderator: Vyacheslav Cherkasov, DPADM/DESA
Panelists:

- Mr. Michael Szafraniec, Operations Manager, Illawarra Community Services, Inc., DaptoNeighborhood Centre, "Engagement in the Information Age" (Australia)
- Mr. Michel Chevallier, Chancellerie d'Etat, "Citizen engagement and compliance with the legal, technical and operational measures in iVoting" (Switzerland)
- Mr. Jonathan Paris, Political Analyst and Senior Advisor of MBI Foundation, "A Private Sector Perspective on Empowering Citizen Stakeholders" (United Kingdom)
- Mr. Emdad Khan, PhD, InternetSpeech, "Effective Citizen Engagement for Economic and Social Development Using Voice Internet: Fastest & Practical Ways to Bridge Digital & Language Divides" (United States)

The role of NGOs can and has played an important role in helping governments best utilize citizen engagement tools. Mr. Michael Szafraniec provided an excellent example through his organization, Care Ways Community. NGOs have the critical links to citizens, the private sector and governments. They also enjoy a degree of independence from each of these main groups, and thus can maintain a healthy degree of autonomy and institutional objectivity. NGOs can also harness a good deal of creativity from among the various sectors, both internally and externally. One main area of interest is in the area of developing and setting of international standards citizen engagement.

This is important because without standards, there exists a vacuum where ICT development and data management can be scattered and nonproductive. Mr. Szsfraniec sees a good opportunity for not only standards-based citizen engagement tools – but the creation of "Social Data Warehouses" based on standardized inputs and outputs. He also sees the need and opportunity in creating an "Index of Measurement" where citizen measurement impacts, capacity can be compared and improved upon when necessary. Under this proposed initiative, codes of ethics can be created and agreed to, there would be standards for how data is captured, stored, and analyzed. There is a need to develop standards of engagement, principals of engagement, and key benchmarks.

The NGO sector enjoys a unique position to help develop, influence, and implement an action agenda. The NGO can help develop the requirements to develop resources and training to further build government expertise and citizen capacity. The NGO sector is in the unique

position to be able to develop, influence and implement international action agenda. The NGO sector is crucial to development of citizen engagement and the use of ICT to enable e-governance. There is an important role that NGO actors have to develop engagement and e-governance resources and training to build government expertise and citizen capacity.

NGOs Role in Development: a Summary[6]

- The actors within the NGO sector act at all levels of society; localized communities through to international organizations.

- Thus, the sector has actors of all size of enterprise from small-localized operations to global multi-national organizations.

- All NGOs are connected to the communities in which they undertake their endeavor and as a result are important actors in the development and delivery of citizen engagement.

- NGOs are uniquely positioned being mid-stream actors enabling and undertaking both downstream and upstream engagement;

- Downstream with citizens and communities in which they undertake their endeavors

- Upstream with governments and authorities who provide frameworks and policy instruments that enable NGO endeavors.

- NGO actors are thus well placed to assist in the development and delivery of both frameworks for engagement and the technologies that enable it.

Clearly, the NGO can play a very important role in working with all sectors in helping to develop and coordinate a programmes and services leading to improved citizen engagement programmes. Further, NGOs working together with the DPADM/UNDESA and the ITU can provide the amplified vision, leadership, guidance and tools necessary to promote the efficacy and practical applications/best practices for citizen engagement.

The EGM also focused on some universal legal issues regarding citizen engagement. Michael Chevallier spoke about citizen engagement in the context of compliance with legal, technical and operational measures in i-Voting. Given all the attention that citizen engagement is receiving it is almost a foregone conclusion that some point in time i-voting or

---

[6] The Role of NGO Actors in the Development of New Technologies for Citizen Engagement and the way Forward. Michael Szafraniec, May 2010.

e-voting will be deployed as a standard citizen option. Most countries do not offer i-Voting as of yet, and this comes at a time where voter turnout is relatively low in most modern democracies. One can draw comparisons to postal voting which was introduced in Switzerland in 1995. At first the postal vote increased by 20 per cent and after five years 95 per cent of votes come by post. Still 40-50 per cent of citizens eligible to vote still do not. In 2003, Switzerland moved to try and capture more citizen engagement through i-Voting. They created three separate channels for voting: postal vote, iVote, and polling stations.

A key factor in ensuring citizen trust was the handling of protected data, in terms of having strict registration, must be as secure as postal voting, and has the legal authority for all its cantons and national government.

The laws that were passed clearly state that there is only one vote per citizen, it is impossible to capture or alter a substantial number of votes, all ballots must be counted, no third party can see a vote, ballots must be encrypted in the voter's PC for the transmission of the vote. The IT application that handles iVoting must be separate and apart from any other IT function. Each function must be performed by at least two persons as a form of checks and balances. Finally an independent third party must endorse the fact that safety measures have been met and that the system works properly.

Chevallier pointed out that there are two worlds that must be considered in the context of voting; the "real world" and the "virtual world" – today both worlds involve IT. In the real world, Switzerland provides citizens with an individual PIN Code and a special voting card. The voting card is a numerical ID with a time-limited validity. The citizen has the choice to use the voting card either in the real world or the virtual world as the necessary information with instructions appears on one ballot. The PIN can be shown as a barcode. In the virtual world there are three main features, contexts or environments. One must take into account the voters' PC, the Internet, and the State's IT system. The federal government of Switzerland can only control the state's IT system, and the challenge is to ensure data protection in uncontrolled environments. This is where the law becomes critically important.

In Switzerland, they have changed the paradigm where they operationalized legal rules one by one and thereby imposing trade-offs between usability and security. They have now adopted a systemic approach were the system is viewed in its entirety as a system platform to be secured – including the web and the voter's device. The voting application is "plugged" into this platform where security is the main concern and voting is a side-offer. In reality the government provides guaranteed ballot box integrity. There is also a secondary system or control, where ballots are tested against various encryption keys, etc.

In Switzerland there are two general types of public for iVoting; the Swiss living abroad and Swiss residents. iVoting offers the expatriates an effective way to exercise their political

rights, and for them, iVoting makes a qualitative difference. Today between 35 per cent and 50 per cent of all votes cast from abroad are electronic votes.

The government continues to expand its experimentation with iVoting and many of the early successes can be owed to very careful and deliberate planning through a sophisticated project management approach. This is certainly a system that cannot exist without trust. The government, wanting to be able to capitalize on its achievements has recently licensed two private companies to commercialize the system outside of Switzerland.

A few other considerations:[7]

- No connection electronic ballot box/voters' register.

- Voters' register only contains voting cards numbers.

- eBallot box has a built-in encrypted device to record the number of cast votes.

- This device is off-limits for the database administrator; no vote can be subtracted without us noticing.

- Altering the votes is impossible: the ballot box's encryption key is owned by the electoral commission.

- The ballot box is shaken before being decrypted in order to alter the ballots' reading order.

- Helpdesk calls are screened for feedback.

Session three had a particular emphasis on systems and technology. One topic that carried over into each of the six EGM sessions was the concern about the digital divide and digital inclusion. It was stated in various ways by nearly every expert that even the best conceived citizen engagement programmes will fall short of their goals if governments fail to seek out ways to reach those who may not have access to modern day Internet devices – be it accessibility, affordability, or availability. Dr. Emdad Khan recognizes the Information Age - information is money" likened to the older saying, "time is money". More than ever, the largest source of information is the Internet. Hence, it is becoming more important that everyone can access the Internet easily and economically. Everyone recognizes the importance of the Internet for economic, social, cultural and other developments, education and more. The Internet is becoming an important and essential part of everybody's life.

---

[7]Citizen Engagement and Compliance with the Legal, Technical and Operational Measures in iVoting; Michael Chevallier, (Geneva, 2010)

Unfortunately, only a small fraction of the world's population can access the Internet today resulting in a large and growing digital divide – between the connected and the unconnected.

Today many governments and NGOs provide computers or even basic low-cost simple computers or computer like devices to people who do not have one. They are also providing personal devices like PDAs and cell phones with screens.

The latest market data shows there are about 550 million connected computers as opposed to over 5.2 billion phones (over 4 billion wireless and over one billion wire-line phones). Thus, computers represent only 15 per cent of telephone population on the average worldwide. This ratio is far worse in the developing countries. Improving this ratio to the desired number, especially, in developing world will take long time given the perceived obstacles that stand in the way. Additionally, certain segments of the population (like the elderly, visually impaired and people unfamiliar with computers) have experienced great difficulty in learning how to use a computer and Internet, and many find the learning process slow and painful at best. The dropout rate for computer training schools worldwide is over 30 per cent. Even some people who are reasonably familiar with computers are having difficulty in keeping up with the requirements to learn new things like how to deal with pop-ups, viruses, spam filters, registry edits and the like, and keeping up with all sorts of software updates.

Personal devices like a cell phone with a display screen or a PDA are great communication devices to use for many similar types of basic information that requires text with small contents. Yet these devices have limitations too. For many the user interface can be difficult because of the small screen and small keypad. In fact, these devices are getting smaller, in general, whereas our eyes and fingers are not. The content is limited as one would need to re-write the content in another language like WML (Wireless Markup Language) in case of cell phone viewing; or the content needs to be manually scrolled in case of a PDA. Visual access makes such devices difficult with the eyes and busy-hands, as well as busy situations like while driving. Many people, especially, in the developing world still do not know how to read or write. Here a visual display-based access might not be very useful to such population.

Today about 15 per cent of cell phones have a small size display screen and some offer limited Internet access. Those smart phone devices that do provide bright and larger screens are also quite expensive to purchase and maintain. Dr. Khan has worked with Internet Speech, Inc., in developing a solution for the millions of people who for whatever reason for not own a computer or smart phone. They believe this "low-tech" technology can truly bridge the Digital Divide to anyone who has some type of telephone be it wired or wireless. This system works by using an automated attendant allows which allows the caller to access the Internet and enjoy surfing, searching, e-mail, e-commerce and other features through voice response.

Using this technology, users basically "talk" and "listen" to the Internet. In other words, the telephone becomes the browser. Simply stated, the telephone becomes the computer and can offer to provide many of the benefits of the Internet and computers to over 5.2 billion people.

Summary of Advantages using Internet Voice Technology

- No need to buy a special device (thus allowing easy & affordable access to many more people).
- No need to deal with small screen or small key pad as users basically talk and listen.
- Much easier to learn as learning how to use a phone is much simpler than learning how to use a computer or personal device.
- No need to re-write the content in another language. There are over 2.5 billion websites on the Internet. Re-writing all of them would cost over trillion dollars and hence not practical.
- No requirement to know how to read or write.

While the Internet was designed with visual access in a large display device in mind, all the information is laid out that attracts our eyes but not ears. Rendering or converting such information into short, precise, easily navigable, meaningful and pleasant to listen to content is a very hard problem that Voice Internet has overcome.

With the all the attention focusing on Internet and mobile device usage, it is important to note that internet voice technologies provides an excellent option for those who do not have access and through such technology can offer many of the same advantages to a significant portion of the population of un-served citizens – especially in developing nations.

Session Four: Strategies and Capacity-Building for Knowledge Management

Moderator: Hani Eskandar, ITU
Panelists:

- Mr. James Griffin, Senior Researcher, IfG.CC, The Potsdam e-government Competence Center, "E-Government Competencies: Looking beyond Technology" (Germany)
- Dr. Rowena G. Bethel, Legal Advisor, Ministry of Finance, "New technologies & citizen engagement: Strategies and capacity building for knowledge management: e-Democracy" (Bahamas)
- Mr. Paul Crookall, Management Consultant and Editor Emeritus, Canadian Government Executive Magazine, "Tools and Trust: building a citizen engagement savvy public service (Canada)
- Mr. EndritKromidha, PhD Researcher, Royal Holloway, University of London, "E-Government frameworks and opportunities toward better stakeholders' engagement" (Albania)

Looking simply beyond technology, Mr. Griffin examined the qualifications of civil servants within the context of e-government. Even with the best technology, there is an urgent need to build capacity by way of new competencies for e-government among civil servants. He noted that qualifications are *input oriented* while competencies are *output oriented*. This is an important distinction because up until recently there have been few scientific articles about competency requirements for e-government.

Mr. Griffin reports on a study he conducted along with Professor Tino Schuppan who performed a number of semi-standardized interviews. In this study, they interviewed German state public administration officials and a smaller group of seasoned experts from among the scientific and consulting communities. The two groups were asked questions relating to existing e-government skills as well as future e-government skill requirements. The researchers found that there were considerable skill deficits in certain areas – especially in the areas of strategy, organizational change and process. In regards to developing new competencies, they identified attitude and awareness changes, and new networked thinking necessary as well as social and communicative competencies.

The key to this study is that when it comes to the expanding role of e-government, more attention needs to focus on leadership and human resource management competencies among public administrators. The study also revealed the need for a kind of "emotionalization" and deeper understanding for e-government which in turn needs to be broadly incorporated into all activities of public administrations. This study essentially leads them to create a "map" where

their work can be replicated by others seeking to develop new competencies regarding e-government.

Griffin argues persuasively that the "map" as developed by the Potsdam e-government Competence Center needs greater verification among other countries, to be able to incorporate their "map" in training and educational programmes, and making competencies part of national strategies.

Ms. Rowena Bethel, Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Finance, for the government of the Bahamas sees greater citizen engagement as tantamount to economic development. Through the citizen engagement lens, it is the process of involving citizens in the development of public policy in a way that affords interactive and interactive deliberations. It is also a process where citizens move from being mere spectators to being actors and creators of content. The government of the Bahamas has identified four important prerequisites, they are:

- Make information available regarding public administration, its processes and policies.

- Provide meaningful avenues and opportunities to engage with the public 'channels of communication'.

- Maintain an interactive and iterative dialogue as matters progress through to their final outcomes.

- An e-government platform that has addressed and implemented a back office knowledge management framework to support online information and services, applications and tools to interactively engage with users.

While many of the earlier e-government systems and programmes had attractive front-ends, they often lacked the back-end or knowledge management framework to support the very functions that they purported to have automated. The expert report from the government of the Bahamas demonstrates their understanding of the complexities of e-government systems and citizen engagement programmes.

For example, they understood from the beginning of the challenges of lower income citizens, as well as engaging youth in the democratic process. In terms of reaching out to the youth segment of the population one study reported that 20 per cent of youth rely on the internet as their main source political campaign news. When you add mobile devices to the mix, that number doubles. Rather than react to the new social media technologies, the government of the Bahamas has actively embraced the notion of e-participation thus taking advantage of the fact that this process can enhance the effectiveness of governments by allowing them to respond to the needs of citizens in a direct manner.

Mr. Paul Crookall with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada pointed out the challenges of governments reacting to social media as a means of citizen engagement. This becomes especially challenging when user controlled technologies run up against command

and control organizations. This is not a question of technology but a challenge to existing policies and procedures. Mr. Crookall raises some key questions, such as:

- How can government take advantage of the social media to engage citizens?
- What internal barriers must be overcome?
- How do we build a public service that is both *able* to engage and wants to engage?
- How can the UN be supportive?

Crookall identifies many drivers for change and response to change that includes old issues and new drivers, fear of mistakes/risk adverse government organizations, open government, citizen engagement tools, trust/distrust, and etc. Getting there has many speed bumps that require deliberate actions regarding security, policy response mechanisms, information management systems, redefining of privacy, limits to open data, and managing risk. Governments must also development measures for success as well as the capacity for leadership in an unchartered field. One of the many reasons why social media and citizen engagement techniques has gained popularity with many governments is they see that opening up traditionally closed processes may help to reduce the void of trust among citizens. Based on Crookall's reading of the literature, case studies, etc., he believes the following is needed:

- Governments should continue and expand collaboration through shared research and shared experiences.
- Identify leaders to make sure benefits are realized.
- Policy centers in the area of privacy, official languages, security, and information management need to understand the new paradigm and promote updated legislation and guidelines as required.
- Leaders need to build a climate and behavior patterns within their work units and organizations that support.
- Collaboration, building trust, respecting privacy/security/language/IM needs, and making "the right mistakes" while improving service delivery and efficiency.

When it comes to further action Crookall believes that governments will have to view citizens in a whole new light as one that moves away from viewing them as a consumer or customer to one that views them as a stakeholder, valued and even trusted. But in order to reach out to the public building engagement must be first started within an organization. Speaking from experience Crookall shares the following as the next steps:

- Build engagement within your organization first:
  - ➢ Clearly identified, sustained and accountable leadership.
  - ➢ Trust your staff.
  - ➢ Make the right mistakes.

> ➤ Use often updated guidelines, supported by periodic legislative change.
>
> ➤ Do the business case cost/benefit analyses, measures of success, change management plan.

- Learn from others: collaboration within government, across government, through the UN.

- Engage Citizens – requires that government t value citizens, trust them, and has both the tools to engage and the will to engage.

Many experts have reported that they see turning e-government engagement challenges into opportunities. Mr. Royal Holloway from the University of London presented a theoretical and practical approach on the Western Balkans. In almost any given government entity one might find three concentric circles, each representing Government, Business, and Citizens. In the center they converge in what could be described as common interest among each of the stakeholders. Holloway draws from the literature that describes the changing nature of what could be called the *new public management.*

The key changes as first described by Gordon (2002) are the addition of market principals to enhance efficiency and productivity, as well as consensual bottom-up decision making and a customer-oriented attitudes from among public administrators. This shift in public administration comes at a time when social media tools have been adopted by governments at all levels in varying degrees. Since many of the new web-based services and social media tools come equipped with measurement tools, it is now easier than ever before to develop benchmarks and share as well as to learn from published best practices. Holloway studied the six countries that comprise the Western Balkans. Information was gathered from national governments, international organizations, United Nations (UNPAN,UNCTAD, UNDP Europe and CIS), the European Union, and the United States Agency for International Development. Holloway examined many of the strategic aspects of some e-government legal challenges, stakeholder requirements, and detailed national progress reports and evaluation.

Based on his findings, Holloway reports on the following:

- The changes in the public sector are in great part related to e-government applications today.
- International organizations could play an important role to foster e-government stakeholders engagement through:
- Involvement vs. engagement from the planning phase.
- Easy to understand and practically useful benchmarking.
- Collaborative citizen/customer strategies.
- Open source approaches.

A common theme from among the experts is the need for public administration to see the positive aspects of citizen engagement and to be able to focus on turning what could be considered negative influences of change toward win-win strategies and advantages for both government and the citizens served. Since the words *restoring trust* between citizens and government has been used throughout the EGM event public administrators may not have much of a choice but to openly embrace the new technologies as a means to rectify a deteriorating situation. Each of the session speakers seem to agree and see this more as an opportunity and not a threat.

Session Five: Creating an Action Agenda for Better Citizen Engagement through ICT for Development

Moderator: Dr. Alan Shark
Panelists:

- Mr. Rajkumar Prasad, CEO, Commonwealth Centre for e-Governance – "E-Government & KM, New Technologies and Trend" (India)
- Mr. Muoka Reuben, Head, Media and Public Relations, Nigerian Communications Commission, "Creating and Action Agenda for better citizen engagement through ICT for development" (Nigeria)
- Dr. Alan R. Shark, Executive Director, Public Technology Institute, "The State of Web 2.0 and Emerging Social Media: Citizen Engagement vs. Citizen Enragement"

As has been pointed out there is a serious issue regarding strategies to cope with the growing digital divide. Much of the conversation however, has been based primarily on either or both Internet access and or broadband access. It is important to recognize the growing popularity of basic mobile phones – especially in developing countries or areas where there is a preponderance of poverty and or rural isolation. Rajkumar Prasad reported on several innovative mobile applications that are in operation today in India. One of the government's m-Government projects took place beginning in 2007 in the Tiruvallur district in Tamil Nadu, India. This project allowed the public, for the first time to send petitions through SMS using their mobile phones to obtain government services such as birth, death, income, and community certificates. The project also provided agricultural and veterinary services through mobile phones. Citizens could send general grievance petitions to the various government departments for other types of services too. This project proves that SMS can serve as a very substitute for those who lack access to the Internet. And for those who do not own mobile devices there are several NGOs and self-help groups that operate in villages to help people transact business using SMS on the citizens' behalf.

Another interesting dimension to this project is that it was created as a partnership between the government and the leading public telecom service provider (BSNL) in India. It was BSNL that developed the software for sending SMS messages received as emails to the district administration. In 2008 the project began allowing users to pay the required fees for some of the services using their mobile phones. The charges are deducted by BSNL from the

mobile phone accounts of the users and paid to the district administration thus saving much time and energy in not having to visit the government office in person.

According to Prasad employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques and using primary data, the research shows that the project made the delivery of services to the people more economically, easier, faster, and corruption-free. IT has proved to save the petitioners substantial amounts of time and money and it also enhanced the reach of e-government services among the people due to the much higher penetration rate of mobile phones.

Despite its relative success, the project faces several challenges for long term sustainability. Among them is content is limited and presently is only available in English. Second, the project needs to ensure continuous technical support from BSNL that seems to be lacking. Third, the project faces opposition from junior and middle level public administrators as it has reduced their ability to collect monies for themselves.

In India mobile phones are used by almost every person at the village level and mobile connectivity is almost everywhere. This project serves as a great example of what can be done with basic mobile telephones. It would appear that a model like this one can easily be replicated in other parts of the world where Internet access is limited.

In Africa, The Nigerian Communications Commission has focused on e-government applications and policies. They have developed a national policy on information and communications with an emphasis on public-private partnerships. The mandate of this joint venture is to create a practical strategy and a single architecture to guide the evolution of digital government solutions with consistent standards, operating platforms and applications across agencies and government systems.

The first stage was the creation of the deployment of an e-government portal. As reported by Reuban Muoka, Head, media and public relations for the Nigerian Communications Commission, e-government is much more than deploying websites. It becomes more meaningful when it improves democratic participation, accountability, and transparency in governance. Essentially, e-government becomes real when it allows for full citizenship participation in governance. This is why the integration of interactive technologies like Web 2.0 technologies becomes crucial. In Nigeria, these technologies are more visible in the private sector than between and among government agencies and ministries. There is hardly any government ministry or institution where today's Web 2.0 technologies are considered a credible medium of communications. These websites are being deployed more for the purpose of improving the speed of transactions rather than to achieve citizenship participation in democratic governance. In spite of these shortcomings, the level of e-government deployment at various levels of government in Nigeria has satisfied three out of the five-stage model as categorized by the UN, as indicated below:

UN's Five Stage E-Government Model Stage Description

I. The online presence of emerging governments is mainly comprised of a web page and/or an official website; links to ministries or departments of education, health, social welfare, labor and finance may/may not exist. Much of the information is static and there is little interaction with citizens.

II. Enhanced governments provide more information on public policy and governance. They have created links to archived information that is easily accessible to citizens, as for instance, documents, forms, reports, laws and regulations, and newsletters.

III. Interactive governments deliver online services such as downloadable forms for tax payments and applications for license renewals. In addition, the beginnings of an interactive portal or website with services to enhance the convenience of citizens are evident.

IV. Transactional governments begin to transform themselves by introducing two-way interactions between 'citizen and government'. It includes options for paying taxes, applying for ID cards, birth certificates, passports and license renewals, as well as other similar G to C interactions, and allows the citizen to access these services online 24/7. All transactions are conducted online.

V. Connected governments transform themselves into a connected entity that responds to the needs of its citizens by developing an integrated back office infrastructure. This is the most sophisticated level of online e-government initiatives and is characterized by:

- Horizontal connections (among government agencies).

- Vertical connections (central and local government agencies).

- Connections between governments and citizens (including e-participation).

- Connections among stakeholders (government, private sector, academic institutions, NGOs and civil society).

The Nigerian government has also established its own set of indicators, which are:

- Beyond these actions by the government at the Federal level, most government ministries and agencies have websites with portal where citizens can download appropriate documents and respond to application requirements where necessary.
- The Nigerian Communications Commission, the telecom regulatory body, provides downloadable documents for telecom operators and stakeholders at www.ncc.gov.ng. Application forms for standard national passport can be

obtained   from the Nigerian Immigration Services website. The Federal Inland Revenue   Services, FIRS, has ample information about payment of taxes for the citizens and corporate bodies.

- Some institutions like the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, JAMB, which conducts examinations for entry into Nigerian universities, has all the necessary information required by the applying students online.

- A number of state governments and government agencies have set up dedicated websites. Most of these state governments believe they have implemented e-government.

- Many state governments in Nigeria have websites that provide information about the actions and activities of the state like the Rivers state website which actually conducts opinion about government performance by the citizens.

- The private sector has completely embraced e-governance. People are tweeting with local companies. Some are advertising on Facebook already and are practically applying different Web 2.0 technologies.

The prospects of citizen engagement in Nigeria are summarized as:

- The application of Web 2.0 technologies like Twitter, Facebook and blogging in its various formats are still alien within the realm of government's interaction with the citizens.
- Indications from the private sector in Nigeria are positive. Websites belonging to private sector organizations have applicable web 2-0 technology applications.

- By end of March 2010, about 1.2 Million Nigerians were on Facebook. Facebook is among the three most visited websites by Nigerians. This is an indication that this may soon be picked up in government circles.

- Having made inroads into three of the UN recognized e-government stages that usher citizen engagement Nigeria has the potentials to achieve a full scale e-government in the near future if she surmounts some major challenges.

- The NCC has initiate projects to improve broadband Internet such as the State Accelerated Broadband Initiative, SABI, aimed at extending broadband Internet services to all the states of the country, and the Wire Nigeria Initiative (WIN) aimed at improving fiber optic connectivity across the country are pointers to a positive future.

- Two major international submarine optics fiber cable projects, Glo 1 and MainOne are expected to begin services and will improve Internet usage, speed penetration, and would ultimately improve e-government.

Muoka reports that there are still many challenges facing full scale e-government in Nigeria. This includes low Internet penetration where there are 78 million telephone subscribers compared with 24 million Internet users – 16 per cent of the population. Broadband Internet subscriptions stands at approximately 800,000 and the connections are admittedly slow connections. Finally many top public administrators still fail to see the positive potential of quality citizen engagement programmes and services.

Alan Shark presented an update on "The State of Web 2.0 and Emerging Social Media: Citizen Engagement vs. Citizen Enragement". Given the explosion of news, information, and opinion through electronic media, and blogs which increasingly gets mixed together is one cause for a growing decline in citizen trust in government and its institutions. Today citizens can not only obtain news and information, they can participate with news and political media outlets as never before. Today's newer mobile devices are actually small hand-held computers with the phone as an app. There are currently well over 300,000 apps and there is a growing number that are government applications.

When used properly, social media can be a positive communications for government. However, as mentioned throughout many of the expert presentations there is much more to social media than simply having an attractive web presence. Governments have many social media tools from which to choose and there is growing evidence that they are becoming more sophisticated with newer applications and services. They key shift in citizen engagement is a shift from a web centric environment, where the web portal that totally dominates the execution strategy toward a multi-channel environment that includes other forms of media inputs such as smart mobile devices, laptops, as well as basic mobile phones.

The following describes some of the basic components in a government's social media toolbox from which to choose:

Social Media Government Toolbox[8]

- Social Network
- Wiki
- Mashup
- RSS Feed
- Listserv - Alerts
- Blog – Micro Blog
- Geo Mapping
- Search Engine Utility

- Online Survey
- Photo Sharing
- Webcast – Webcam
- Video Blog/Vlog – Video Sharing
- Podcast - Vodcast
- Virtual World - Games

Most of the popular social media sites were designed for individuals and not for businesses or governments. However, businesses have embraced the use of social media technologies as a means to better engage with the customer, and local governments have followed the same path initially focusing on citizens as customers. The evolution continues with governments experimenting with new applications that are geared towards engaging citizens as rightful stakeholders as one way of helping to restore trust. Shark pointed out as have the other EGM participants that there is much more to citizen engagement than a website or mobile phone application. Aside from any technical requirements, there are public administration requirements (training and developing staff capacity), and finally there are financial and policy requirements for sustainable services and well-thought out systems. The following list just a few of the policy concerns that need to be addressed by any government authority contemplating civic engagement programmes and services.

- What is your policy on social media?
- URL links?
- Privacy& disclosure?
- Citizen postings?
- Cookies?
- Network/system security?
- Government employees (general)?
- Government issued laptops, PDAs, etc.
- Restrictions to usage & communications?
- Who is in charge of overall "communications"?
- Who monitors social media, frequency, content?

---

[8] Shark (2010)

- How frequently is social media monitored?
- Training and competency polices?

More perplexing are issues involving citizen engagement and social media[9] include:

Citizen Engagement and Social Media Concerns
How do we "listen?"
How do we respond?
How do we weigh intensities of "feelings" and "thoughts"
How (where) do we store data and video?
How do we react to inaccurate, misleading and false information?
How do we react and or pro-act in an instantaneous environment?
How do we manage expectations? Rage?
Does everything need to go to one place???
Should elected leaders have their own social media presence?
Where does policy, administration, politics converge?

---

[9] Shark (2010)

Conclusion

Based on the presentations of the EGM presenters strongly suggest that e-government initiatives are growing throughout all segments of government. As e-government initiatives have evolved, so too citizen expectations. Technology has also evolved making it increasingly possible to reach citizens in greater numbers. Today there over 4.5 billion mobile phone users worldwide that reach over 67.6 percent of the world's population, and the growth trend continues upward. Still, in developed countries just under 30 per cent of mobile devices connection to the Internet – but this number is expected to grow exponentially over the next decade.

While a governments primary web portal will most likely remain as the key destination point for critical information and services, e-government applications have evolved and have moved toward a multi-channel environment.

Here the there are multiple pathways to engage citizens and government. These pathways include:

1. **Primary web portals**

This is has become the most traditional form of e-government services. The pros are that the Internet is most always open and available. Citizens can access web portals anywhere in the world as long as they have access to a computer and the Internet. Cons include millions of the world's population cannot afford Internet connectivity, or the necessary equipment and training.

2. **Smart phone internet access**

This is a fast-growing segment of the wireless broadband market where mobile devices also serve as a pocket computer that can access the Internet, send and receive e-mails, take and share picture and videos. The pros are the relative simplicity and mobility of these feature-rich devices that can perform most communication functions as found in laptops and PCs. Further, wireless broadband is usually more accessible. Cons include the relatively high cost of the devices that can often cost double than that of a traditional mobile phone.

3. **SMS mobile phone applications**

As noted by example, SMS (text messaging) can accomplish some of the e-government functionality without any fancy graphic interface. The pros are that most all new mobile devices offer SMS and at a relatively affordable cost. Mobile phone coverage is almost in every population center in the world, and a rather high percentage of the population has or has access to such mobile devices. Cons include the obvious limitations to not having much (if any) of a graphic interface – thus any access to e-government services is limited.

4. Voice prompted interface

InternetSpeech, a company focusing on converting certain Internet functionality from visual display to voice prompts and recognition, demonstrated there is another option that has recently been made available. The advantages are it makes the most commonly available mobile devices throughout the world and partially transforms what is normally scene into a voice based transaction. Another advantage is the ability to "speak" different languages to different populations. Some disadvantages would include the training of citizens in its use, plus the limitations in not being able to visualize a transaction.

5. Social media applications

The newest e-government offerings and applications center on social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Originally developed solely for individuals social media sites now also cater to businesses, and more recently governments as a new means of reaching out to customers and citizens respectively. Applications such as Twitter have played key roles in alerting citizens to local emergencies. The pros are that millions of citizens routinely visit and participate in such sites and may be more likely to do so than visit a government website. Such sites encourage two way interactions. Most of the social media sites operate mostly for free and therefore the hosting of the application is done by a third-party. Cons include many governments are ill-equipped to handle social media sites in terms of content, monitoring and being able to respond quickly to postings of any kind. Social media sites are not always free from cyber-attacks and can always be as reliable as other technology platforms.

Throughout the Meeting, the expert panelist's presentations and discussions pointed toward the need for continued research and work in the area of the evolving e-government initiatives and now citizen engagement applications – not as a luxury but as a necessity in trying to earn and restore public trust in government. Overall there are six general categories that require further research and information sharing, they are:

1. Public administration capacity building and strategic planning.

2. Policies & procedures on social media sites usage, benchmarking, etc.

3. Policies and procedures for managing citizen expectations.

4. Best practices for citizen engagement applications.

5. Technology advancements reporting.

6. E-government and social media international law. (Digital signatures, security, authentication, identity, content, payments, privacy, terms of service, etc.)

The expert panelists were in complete agreement that much more work is required. The needs of citizens pertaining to e-government and citizen engagement have been well

documented, however, the barriers toward innovation is entirely new and requires a new and expanded focus. Perhaps the most alluring of all the citizen engagement platforms resides in what devices the most number of citizens have and use. Following and engaging the citizen is the new imperative and it is more likely to be successful when it is done on a preferred device that a citizen carries and uses daily, thus making mobile government (m-government) the new frontier.
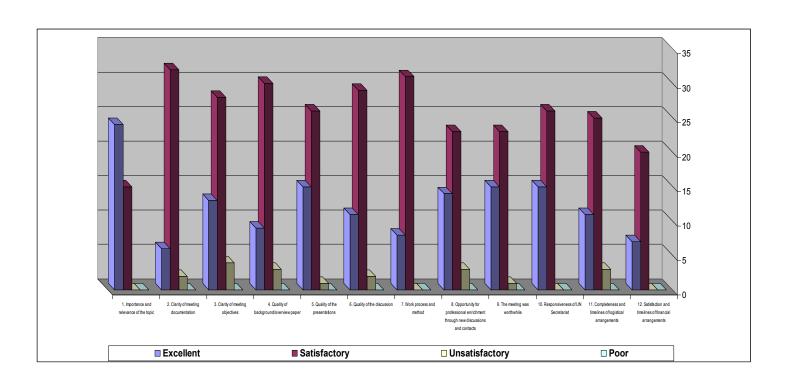
Annex 1

EGM Evaluation: Analysis of Multiple Choice Questions

Expert Group Meeting on e-Government and New Technologies: Towards Citizen Engagement for Development
Geneva, Switzerland, 13-14 May 2010

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor
1. Importance and relevance of the topic	24	15	0	0
2. Clarity of meeting documentation	6	32	2	0
3. Clarity of meeting objectives	13	28	4	0
4. Quality of background/overview paper	9	30	3	0
5. Quality of the presentations	15	26	1	0
6. Quality of the discussion	11	29	2	0
7. Work process and method	8	31	0	0
8. Opportunity for professional enrichment through new discussions and contacts	14	23	3	0
9. The meeting was worthwhile	15	23	1	0
10. Responsiveness of UN Secretariat	15	26	0	0
11. Completeness and timelines of logistical arrangements	11	25	3	0
12. Satisfaction and timelines of financial arrangements	7	20	0	0

Annex 2

Country	Name of Participants	Title	Organization
ALBANIA	Mr. Endrit KROMIDHA	PhD Research Student in Management and IT	School of Management, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, UK
AUSTRALIA	Mr. Michael SZFRANIEC	Operations Manager	Careways Community Australia, Australia
AUSTRALIA	Ms. Allison HORNERY	Co-Founder, CIVICTEC	Australia
BAHAMAS	Dr. Rowena BETHEL	Legal Advisor, Ministry of Finance, Executive Commissioner of the Compliance Commission	P.O. Box CB-11370, Nassau, Bahamas
BELARUS	Mr. Yury YAROSHEVICH	Senior Expert, Policy Analysis Department	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minsk, Belarus
BRAZIL	Mr. Alvaro GALVANI	Head of Division, Brazilian Ministry for External Relations	Brazil
CANADA	Mr. Paul CROOKALL	Management Consultant and Editor Emeritus, Canadian Government Executive Magazine	Ontario, Canada
CHINA	Mr. Xuefei WANG	Senior Engineer, China Academy of Telecom Research	China
COLOMBIA	Ms. Maria Isabel MEJIA-JARAMILLO	Gerente General, programmea Agenda de Conectividad, Estrategia de Gobierno en linea	Ministerio de Tecnologias de la Informacion y las Comunicaciones, Bogota, Colombia

EGYPT	Dr. Hoda BARAKA	First Deputy to the Minister, Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies (MCIT)	Egypt
ETHIOPIA	Mr. Makane FAYE	OIC, e-Applications,	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
GERMANY	Mr. James GRIFFIN	Senior Researcher	IfG.CC -The Potsdam eGovernment Competence Center, Berlin, Germany
GERMANY	Prof. Tino SCHUPPAN	Professor, Founder and Chief Executive Officer	IfG.CC -The Potsdam eGovernment Competence Center, Berlin, Germany
INDIA	Dr. K. JAYAKUMAR	Joint Secretary (Adm), Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)	Rafi Marg, New Delhi, India 110001
INDIA	Mr. Rajkumar PRASAD	CEO, Commonwealth Centre for e-Governance	Delhi, India
INDONESIA	Mr. M.H. MUNZAER	Standardization ICT and Application, Ministry of Communications and Informatics	Indonesia
INDONESIA	Mr. Johan HAILITIK	Standardization ICT and Application, Ministry of Communications and Informatics	Indonesia
IRAQ	Mr. Dalawr CHALABI	Projects Manager, Kurdistan Region of Iraq	Iraq

MACEDONIA	Mr. Ivo IVANOVSKI	Minister of Information Society	Former Republic of Macedonia
MOROCCO	Ms. Rachida FAKHRI	Counsellor, MICNT	Morocco
MOROCCO	Mr. El Moustafid SAID	Expert, ANRT	Morocco
NIGERIA	Mr. Muoka REUBEN	Head, Media and Public Relations, Nigerian Communications Commission	Nigeria
POLAND	Mr. Wojciech CELLARY	Professor, Poznan University of Economics, Department of Information Technology	Warsaw, Poland
POLAND	Ms. Anna STACHERA	Senior Expert, Ministry of Economy	Poland
POLAND	Mr. Wojciech TRUSZ	Expert, Ministry of Economy	Poland
ROMANIA	Mr. Ionut NEGRESCU	Director, European Affairs and International Relations Directorate	Ministry of Information and Communications Society, Romania
SAUDI ARABIA	Mr. A ALDARRAB	Deputy Governor, CITC	Saudi Arabia
SUDAN	Mr. MUBARAK M.A.H. El-hussain	General Manager, National Information Center	Sudan
SWITZERLAND	Mr. Michel CHEVALLIER	Secretaire General adjoint, Chancellerie d'Etat	Geneva, Switzerland

SWITZERLAND	Ms. Viola KREBS	Director, ICVolunteers	104, rue de Carouge, P.O. Box 755, Geneva 1211, Switzerland
SWITZERLAND	Dr. Jovan KURBALIJA	Founding Director, DiploFoundation	56, Rue des Lausanne, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland
SWITZERLAND	Mr. Michel WARYNSKI		Etat de Geneve, Switzerland
SWITZERLAND	Mr. Dario Duran	Director,	
TANZANIA	Mr. Francis MAYILA	Senior Internal Auditor, TCRA	Tanzania
TUNISIA	Mr. Emna MRIEF	Unite de Suivi du SMSI, Ministry of Communications	Tunisia
UNITED KINGDOM	Mr. John MORTON-HICKS	InternetSpeech	United Kingdom
UNITED KINGDOM	Mr. Jonathan S. PARIS	London-based Political Analyst and Senior Advisor to Sheikh MBI al Jaber; Chairman of MBI International Foundation	
UNITED NATIONS	Mr. Vyatcheslav CHERKASOV	Governance and Public Administration Officer, Socio-economic Governance and Management Branch, Division for Public Administration and Management, UNDESA	United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA

UNITED NATIONS	Mr. Hani Eskandar	Technial Officer, ICT Applications, BDT/POL/CYB, International Telecommunications Union	Geneva, Switzerland
UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY	Mr. Tomasz JANOWSKI	Head, UNU-IIST Center for Electronic Governance at UNU	United Nations University, Macao, China
UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY	Mr. Adegboyega OJO	Research Fellow, UNU-IIST Center for Electronic Governance at the UNU	United Nations University, Macao, China
UNITED STATES	Mr. Emdad KHAN, PhD	InternetSpeech	California, USA
UNITED STATES	Dr. Alan SHARK	Executive Director, Public Technology Institute	Washington, D.C., USA
WEST INDIES	Dr. Anurag SINHA PhD	ICT Advisor, Office of the Prime Minister	Botanical Garden, Tenteen, St. Georges, Grenada, WI

Annex 3

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

13 May 2010

DR.YURY GRIN

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ITU TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

Ladies and gentlemen and distinguished delegates,

For decades the United Nations is undertaking various activities related to the citizen engagement for development through e-Government. However nowadays, these actions are more visible than ever.

Several major United Nations summits, resolutions and international declarations have focused on the themes of participation and partnership in a wide range of international issues, including: Sustainable Development; Economic Development; Crime Prevention; the Status of Women; Action for Peace; the United Nations System; Science and Technology for Development; Public Administration and Development; and Development in Africa.

Several of these resolutions concentrate specifically on the need for more participatory approaches to governance, focusing on partnerships among multiple stakeholders at both the national and international levels, including national governments, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, media and the private sector.

Today's meeting on "e-Government and New Technologies: Towards better citizen engagement for development.", organized jointly by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the International Telecommunication Union, as co-facilitators for WSIS Action Line C7 on e-Government, is a fruit of these efforts.

What we are planning to do today, is to review and to analyze approaches and best practices in understanding what constitutes citizen engagement in the sphere of e-government and related policies and programmes.

The questions that we are, I would say, invited to ask are: How citizen engagement and e-government can best be applied for good governance in countries worldwide? What are the issues and challenges countries face as they advance in developing their citizen engagement and e-government programmes? How to improve communications and accelerated e-participation, including disadvantaged groups?

Let's join on our efforts, exchange our knowledge and ideas in order to find efficient solutions permitting us to reach our goal. The Meeting provides a great opportunity to bring all of us together to further evolve the philosophical framework for the assessments of citizen engagement worldwide.

Annex 4

Speech of Mr. Valery Timofeev
Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR)
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
WSIS Forum 2010 - UNDESA-ITU Workshop
Session: E-Government and New Technologies:
Towards better citizen engagement for development
Geneva, Switzerland, 13- 14 May 2010

Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be with you here today and launching two days debate on the subject so actual and important. Actual, because nowadays we are in the era of the information age; important because what is behind it, is a concern for all of us.

New technologies have the potential to make the promises of e-government real. That is the first fact. E-government and e-democracy together are one piece of the e-democracy puzzle. That is the second fact.

The third fact is that today, the politics and governance are going online around the world, no matter if it is online campaigning, lobbying or political news. However, citizens and e-citizens are the only people who will fully experience this process.

Deepening citizen participation in democracy is vital to ensure that governments can accommodate the will of their people. This raises key questions that involve policies regarding:

- How citizens engage in e-Government? What kind of policies and procedures that support a dynamic system?
- Does it and how it affects their lives?
- How to display government's information in a manner that is easy for average citizens to understand and that increases significantly comprehension and engagement?

- How government staff and citizens are trained to properly acquire such skills as participation management; transformation participation into substance for policy inputs and development accreditation strategies for civil society?

These are only some of the challenges that we are facing nowadays in this subject.

We have to emphasize, that new technology is changing the balance of power. ICT enables a new model of citizenship, where the citizens are both better informed and more demanding. Thus, government and public administration have to learn to adapt to this new political behavior.

Moreover, they need to play a proactive role in the online world. By promoting and developing a new form of citizenship empowered by ICT, it is possible to successfully integrate citizens into the democratic life and decision-making process.

That is why better citizen engagement for development is such a key component of the WSIS Forum, and more particularly e- Government question. To illustrate the value of this, let me cite just a few successful examples:

The main objective of the government portal in Angola is to bring all governmental public information and services under the same platform and to make them available to citizens via the internet. Angolans can thus find information on government programmes, and are given the option to send their views and comments to the government. This portal has received the TIGA 2007 Award (Technology in Government Award) with the comment the portal has citizens' feedback on services built in it, thus providing opportunity for service improvements, which is the essence of e-government

Lokvani is an e-governance initiative which was designed and implemented by the combined efforts of the District Administration and the National Informatics Center in Sitapur (UP,India), a city which has an 88 per cent rural population with a 38.86 per cent literacy rate. The Lokvani system provides information on all vacancies in the district as well as downloadable application forms for job seekers. The Lokvani system has empowered the citizens by generating awareness towards their rights through a seamless flow of information, as the services offered by Lokvani encompass a wide range of government departments such as the Department of Public Grievances, the District Administration, the Development Department, etc. Lokvani has helped the local government monitor performance of its staff, providing also for the shortcoming of human resources in implementing different schemes of assistance and development.

The Philippine online service allows Filipinos to communicate their concerns to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA) via SMS. About 28 million out of the 80 million Filipinos have cellular phones, each sending an average of seven text messages a day. Additionally, text messages currently outnumber voice calls 8 to 1 in the Philippines. That is why cellular phones have been identified as the preferred device for eParticipation in the Philippines. The Philippine online service, is a 'pioneer' in the use of SMS in government. It is used for complaints about government services, projects, and officials.

As we all know, putting in place the technology is not enough. To better engage Citizens for development through e-Government, we have to invest in a sound communication campaign, designed to build awareness of this new opportunity and to inform and to educate citizens on how to use it.

Nowadays, modern technologies evolves rapidly; there is always a need to improve the services and implementing new technological solutions in it in order to better meet citizens expectations.

What we cannot forget is that citizen engagement for development is fundamental for our times. Processes and technologies can directly engage the citizen with greater information and improve transparency, accountability and participation. It can strengthen planning and decision making process of all levels of government and improve transparency and the delivery of services.

However, for that we need full engagement of stakeholders at all levels. This is the essential foundations of good governance.

Today we observed the dramatic increase in mobile telephony around the world which includes the developing nations. The devices themselves are becoming smarter and feature-rich with major advances coming to market each year. Social media platforms originally designed for personal use are now being embraced by national and local governments across the globe. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, to name a few social networks all contain citizen engagement features and opportunities.

Nowadays, every single day we have a new technology. Every single day more citizens use the Internet around the world, applying it for different reasons. Finally, every single day another government adds a new online feature designed to create closer collaboration between government and citizens.

I think we all recognize the tremendous benefits citizen engagement in e-

government can bring – to governments themselves, to the people and businesses they serve- to all of us.

I deeply believe that only by demonstrating that participation in e-Government leads to better democratic outcomes- helping society develop and meet its political, social, economic and cultural goals- we are able to reach our goal.

I trust that engaging citizens more efficient in the e-Government, is another step towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals.