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THE AFRICAN E-LEADERSHIP MEETING

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 20-23 June, 2011

I. INTRODUCTION

"Stressing the need for capacity-building initiatives aimed at institution-building, human resources development, strengthening financial management and harnessing the power of information and technology, and reiterating that efficient, accountable, effective and transparent public administration, at both the national and international levels, has a key role to play in the implementation of internationally agreed goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration", the General Assembly decided to designate 23 June as United Nations Public Service (A/RES/57/277, para.2 and 3). It also encouraged Member States to organize special events on that day to highlight the contribution of public service in the development process.

Pursuant to this resolution, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), within its public administration capacity building programs, established a component on Innovations in Governance and Public Administration - which includes the United Nations Public Service Forum and the United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA). Since 2001, UNDESA, through its Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), has organized capacity building forums on issues related to public governance to provide government officials with a platform to exchange ideas, practices and strategies to advance the United Nations development agenda. The 2010 United Nations Public Service Forum, which took place in Barcelona, Spain, from 21 to 23 June, brought together over 400 participants, including high-level United Nations officials, ministers, senior government officials, innovators, regional and national organizations from over 77 countries and focused on the "Role of Public Service in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals". The Barcelona Declaration has been instrumental in sharing the recommendations made during the Forum with the world at large.

This year, the United Nations Public Service Forum, which will focus on "Transformative Leadership in Public Administration and Innovation in Governance", will take place in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania from 20 to 23 June 2011. It will be organized by

UNDESA/DPADM in collaboration with the President's Office of the United Republic of Tanzania[1], and in partnership with UN-Women.

The Capacity-building Forum will provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion and analysis of policies and strategies, as well as knowledge sharing of innovative practices and tools through plenary sessions and parallel capacity development workshops in key thematic areas of public governance: Workshop 1: Leading with Integrity and Inventiveness in Public Governance; Workshop 2: Engaging Citizens and Civil Society Organizations in Reconstruction and Recovery Strategies after Natural Disasters; Workshop 3: African e-Leadership Capacity-Building and Workshop 4: Leading Innovations in Gender-Responsive Service Delivery (organized by UN-Women)[2]. On the last day of the Forum, the *rapporteurs* of each workshop will present to the plenary a set of recommendations, which will be discussed during a high-level ministerial roundtable. The presentation of the recommendations to the Ministerial panel is particularly important because it has been realized that without political support from Ministries responsible for Public service most of the proposed capacity building strategies do not get the political leverage and resources to be implemented. The Ministerial panel is therefore strategically positioned to cultivate the political support for capacity building and possibly provide opportunity for discussing mobilization for enhanced capacity building activities targeting strengthening of public administration. The Forum will conclude with the United Nations Public Service Awards Ceremony on the occasion of the United Nations Public Service Day and Africa Public Service Day.

The ultimate goal of the United Nations Public Service Forum is to build the capacity of public administration, particularly in developing countries, to anticipate and respond to the many challenges of our times (including multiple crises, volatile international markets, climate change, persisting poverty, etc.) in a collaborative and innovative way. It also aims at building a shared understanding among all governance actors of what policies and strategies, practices and tools Member States can adopt to make public administration more effective, transparent, accountable, participatory and citizen-centric. In addition, it aims at providing networking opportunities and a platform for facilitating the transfer and adaptation of innovative practices.

II. Background Information

The explosion of digital connectivity, the significant improvements in communication and information technologies paired with an ever increasing stakeholder's engagement are revolutionizing the governance system and delivery of the public services. The potential of ICT tools for improved efficiency, reduced cost, enhanced quality of online public services, greater dialogue between citizen and government, implementation of innovative practices are being explored by governments in Africa and around the world as means of improving the quality and responsiveness of the services they provide to their citizens. Leading e-government countries are expanding the reach and accessibility of their services and public infrastructure to allow citizens to experience faster and greater transparent access to government information and services. The e-government initiatives of government

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[1] Holding the 2011 UN Public Service Forum in Dar-es Salaam is very significant since Tanzania will host Africa Public Service Day, bringing the whole region together. Moreover, Africa Public Service Day coincides with the United Nations Public Service Day commemorated on 23 June.

agencies and departments to use the ICT tools and applications, internet and mobile devices to support good governance, strengthen existing relationships and build new partnerships with civil society, have created a wave of technological innovation and government transformation.

E-Government is a multidimensional and complex issue, which requires broad definition and understanding in order to be able to design and implement a successful strategy. The adoptive challenge of e-Government go far beyond technology, they call for organizational structures and individual skills, new forms of leadership, transformative public and private partnerships, etc. It offers great opportunities such as (i) cost reduction and efficiency gains, (ii) quality of services delivery to business and customers, (iii) transparency, anticorruption and accountability, (iv) networking and community creation, (v) improvement of the quality of decision making and (vi) promotion of the use of ICT in other sectors of society

While providing enormous opportunities, at the same time, e-government represents many challenges, such as establishing strong leaderships that would implement innovative initiatives and would successfully implement them through motivating, influencing and supporting their staff, their constituencies and their people.

They must systematically examine how e-government transforms the "traditional roles of leadership" at governmental, organizational and individual levels. Going from the individual to the organizational/governmental levels, today a senior leadership team have to formulate strategic e-government goals, implement e-strategy, and align the strategy and goals to the country's overall vision. It has the budget to implement to activities outlined in the strategy and should ensure compliance with international standards.

At individual level, the leadership team should have business acumen, leadership capabilities and is responsible for the processes and practices supporting the flow of information. In essence, a Government e-Leader is a senior Government Official that is vested with authority across departmental and ministerial boundaries with guiding decision making and setting strategy regarding the country's ICT architecture, and who assists governments in their efforts to run more effective and efficient programmes.

Other challenges are:

(i)   creating of a clear vision and mission through well aligned e-government development strategies;
(ii)   establishing a modern and robust ICT infrastructure;
(iii)   establishing an institutional framework;
(iv)   adopting a legal and regulatory framework that would allow the full exploitation of e-government opportunities;
(v)   designing and implementing of public policies;
(vi)   improving human capital through capacity building programs;
(vii)   improving education and continuous learning;
(viii) introducing a change management culture to facilitate change and incorporate new technologies into the policy making process;
(ix)   developing partnerships and collaboration through public/private partnership;

(x)   creating online communities and networks amongst government entities and civil society;

The above are daunting challenges that face developing countries in achieving their national development goals and reaching sustainable e-government development progress. The United Nations will be working with key decision making officials tackle the above challenges and develop a way forward to overcome them. This will play a role in governments achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs) , including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

DPADM is also home to the UN Secretariat E-government Program. The United Nations' work in the area of e/m government reflects the trust it enjoys from national governments due to the legitimacy that comes with being the impartial and world body. As a result, The Division of Public Administration & Knowledge Management (DPADM) in the United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) receives many requests from its Member States to support their efforts through a focused program of awareness raising, capacity building and training in e/m-government for development.

DPADM is often invited by the Member States to provide advisory services in e/m-government and ICT for development. It disseminates its e/m-government work through the extensive reach of its United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN) which plays an important role in information and knowledge sharing and capacity building on e/m-government around the world and through the work of its Inter-regional Advisers.

III. Africa e-government development and the African E-Leadership

Although many African governments are seeking to develop the essential economic and frameworks for the deployment of ICT, some find it difficult to divert scarce resources towards promoting indigenous capacities when faced with pressing priorities of reducing poverty; providing health and education; and maintaining sustainable economic growth.

Despite progress in expanding the reach of basic and new ICT services and applications in African countries, the majority of the population still has major challenges to provide access to broadband, telephone service, computers and the Internet to their respective citizens. One reason for this is that governments are confronted with economic, social and political challenges that place enormous pressures on the allocation of scarce resources.

According to the UN E-government Survey 2010, which ranks countries according to their e-government readiness, indicates that of all sub-regions of Africa fall below the world average. "Notwithstanding the overall low scores of e-government development index in the region, some countries have managed to improve the web presence either in the national portals or ministry websites"[3] The same study finds that the websites of most

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[3] UN E-Government Survey 2010, page 62.

ministries in the region provide basic information, but e-services are generally not available.

Given the progress made and challenges ahead, the current and future e-government development in Africa require politically empowered and technically capable national leadership that would not only promote and implement the national e-government agenda, but would seek out to get the best of practices, knowledge, experiences and expertise at the regional and global level and bring them home and innovatively adopt them.

The majority of African countries has adopted or are in the process of adopting ICT and e-government strategies. For the most part, these strategies share some common priorities, such as:

(i) Develop a strategic ICT leadership and institutional framework that create a favorable environment for cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders;
(ii) Improve ICT infrastructure;
(iii) Support the creation of local ICT industry to increase employment and entrepreneurship;
(iv) Strengthen human capital;
(v) Establish a Legal and Regulatory Framework;
(vi) Identify productive sectors that benefit from the use of ICTs;
(vii) Develop online service that e-commerce transactions;
(viii) Improve local content to build national portals that will serves as gateways to information and knowledge;
(ix) Provide Universal Access to improve productivity and provide opportunities in both urban and rural areas.

The Government Chief Information Officer (CIO) is a Senior Executive who is also the champion or face of the e-government in the country Chief Information Officer and reports directly to the highest officials in the country (President, Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister)

In majority of African countries the role of Government CIO has been place at the minister level and they are facing the difficult task of implementing the two national objectives (i) to provide a national framework that will enable ICT to contribute towards achieving national development goals as well as Millennium Development Goals; and (ii) to transform their countries into knowledge base societies through the application of ICT.

The UN E-Leadership Capacity Development Workshop will review and analyze approaches and best practices of African eLeaders (Ministers/Presidential Advisors/Heads of Regulatory Agencies/ Head of Departments/ Chief Information Officers) in responding to their challenges of e-Government development. It will tackle issues facing countries as they align their development priorities with their e-government strategies. The workshop will serve as a forum for African eLeaders to share and exchange their challenges and practices with eLeaders from other regions of the world.

This workshop will aim to provide a platform for high level officials (minister or equivalent) from Africa, their respective counterparts from the Americas, Asia/Pacific,

Europe, the Middle East and North African (MENA) region and selected United Nations staff, to share experiences, and lessons learned debate emerging issues of e-government development and review the role of leadership in promoting such development in particular. In this regard, the workshop aims to focus on two inter-linking issues: (i) the progress made in e-Government development in Africa and (ii) the role of leadership in managing change and innovation and pushing ahead national e-government agendas. The workshop will be fully incorporated into the Forum. There will be a presentation on the goals and objectives of the Workshop in the opening plenary session, followed by two full days of presentations and discussions, ending with the presentation of findings, conclusions and recommendation at the plenary session on June 23, 2011. The workshop will contribute to enhancing the overall knowledge base of DESA staff in the subject area and provide input to future work of the DPADM concerning but not limited to its normative and analytical work on egovernment development, including its technical cooperation activities. The Division also intends to bring the findings and recommendations of the Workshop to the attention of ECOSOC through the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its next session in April 2012

IV. Objectives

The Leadership Capacity Building Workshop aims to explore the role and importance of leadership in e-government development. It will provide for the followings:

➢ Facilitate an active dialogue amongst the African CIOs, between them and their counterparts from different regions of the world as well as regional and international development partners and UN organizations in addressing the challenges and assessing the institutional framework for e/m government development in Africa;

➢ Promote regional cooperation and the regional perspective in e/m-government leadership, through discussions and presentations regarding the models of institutional frameworks and the fundamentals of the enabling environment;

➢ Promote international cooperation and exchange of experiences amongst the high level decision makers across the regions;

➢ Map innovative practices of e/m government leadership in implementing development goals, citing best practices and lessons learnt;

➢ Provide a set of findings, conclusions and recommendations on the role of CIO in implementing successfully e-government strategies, as a way to achieve national development goals, aligned with the achievement of Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

➢ Establish a network of CIOs (eLeaders in Africa) as a regional forum where challenges will be discussed and experiences will be shared on a more sustainable way.

V. Participants

The participants of the African eLeadership Meeting will include high level officials with decision making authority on egovernment (minister or equivalent) from African countries, one high level official (minister or equivalent) from Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, North Africa and Arab region. The meeting will be undertaken in close cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Science and Technology Division (ISTD/UNECA). The participants of the UNPSA Forum including national delegations, the academia, the private sector as well as representatives of regional and international organizations involved in African development will be on attendance.

VI. Organization and Management

The meeting will be conducted in English and French. All documents and papers presented there will subsequently be posted at the UNDESA web link at the following address:

http://www.unpan.org/DPADM/UNPSDayAwards/UNPublicServiceDay/2011UnitedNationsPublicSe rviceAwardsForum/tabid/1447/language/en-US/Default.aspx

Registration will start on the first day of UNPSA, 20 June and the participants are expected to attend the plenary sessions. The actual meeting will commence at 8:30 a.m. on June 21, 2011 and will end at 6:00 p.m. On the second day, 22 June, 2011 the meeting will be held from 9:00a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The participants are expected to stay through the closing plenary session on 23 June, 2011 where the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the African eLeadership Meeting will be shared with the overall participants of UNPSA Forum 2011.

VII. Venue

Milimani Conference Center,
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania