EIGHTEENTH JOINT UN/INTOSAI SEMINAR ON GOVERNMENT AUDITING

- Auditing E-Government as a Tool to Empower Citizens and Further Socio-Economic and Human Development
- Presentation by Esther Stern, Interregional Adviser
- Division for Public Administration and Development Management, UNDESA
SAIs HAVE MADE MANY INROADS INTO THE AUDIT OF E-GOVERNMENT

- Some SAIs have carried out audits of e-government to assess the accrued benefits at the operational level, such as cost-effectiveness, quality, integrity, reliability and timeliness in the delivery of services and goods; and of e-procurement and e-taxation.

- Much remains to be done to promote the audit of the real or potential benefits of e-government in terms of transparency and accountability to the public, citizen empowerment, and furthering of socio-economic and human development.
PROPOSAL FROM UN-DESA TO THE PARTICIPANTS

- SAI participants will not limit their focus to the highly complex technical ITC audit issues and trends concerned with e-government.

- They will also focus on the advantages of e-government in creating "public good" and in furthering human development and other socio-economic goals encapsulated in the 2000 United Nations Millennium Development Goals.
What is E-Government?

- When referring to e-government, people in general tend to think, first and foremost, of the ICT side of the equation. We should, nonetheless, stress that the key element, in e-government, is not the “e” [electronic], but “government.”

- The “e” is just an enabler that can catapult governments to deliver services in a more efficient, transparent and cost-effective manner.

- E-government is justified if it enhances the capacity of public administration to increase the supply of public value, i.e. the things that people want.

- Without strategic commitment to a developmental vision/change programme, the hierarchy will use technology to reproduce itself. Technological developments, in absence of institutional and organizational innovation, will be assimilated into the status quo.

- ICT [can] produce “politics as usual” by reinforcing the power of established institutions, such as major political parties, interest groups and media corporations that are already well entrenched players in the policy process.

- With the political will to effect change, providing for e-participation could become a tool for citizen empowerment.
Conceptual framework:
The Millennium Development Goals

In the 2000 UN Millennium Declaration, the Member States have pledged:

- to work “for more inclusive political process, allowing genuine participation by all citizens”
- “to ensure (…) the right of the public to have access to information”
Objectives of the UN E-Government Surveys

- to provide an appraisal of the use of E-government as a tool in the delivery of services; and

- to provide a comparative assessment of the willingness and ability of governments to involve the citizen in e-participation.
The E-government Survey 2004 presents a comparative ranking of the 191 member states according to two primary indicators:

- the state of e-government readiness; and

- the extent of e-participation
What is the E-Government Index?

- E-Government readiness is a quantitative composite index of website assessment; telecommunication infrastructure and human resource endowment.

- E-Participation index is a qualitative assessment of the quality, relevance and usefulness of government websites in providing online participatory tools to the people.
North America (0.875) and Europe (0.587) lead followed by South and Eastern Asia (0.460); South & Central America (0.456); Caribbean (0.410); Western Asia (0.409); and South & Central Asia (0.321).

Oceania (0.300) and Africa (0.253) have the lowest average e-government readiness.
### 13E-Readiness Index 2004: Top 15 countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>E-Gov Readiness Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>0.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>0.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>0.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>0.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>0.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>0.824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>0.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>0.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>0.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>0.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>0.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>0.754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### E-Participation Index 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>E-participation Index</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>0.934</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>0.803</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>0.770</td>
<td>6 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>0.770</td>
<td>6 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>0.770</td>
<td>6 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>0.738</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>0.672</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>0.623</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>11 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>0.590</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>0.574</td>
<td>13 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.574</td>
<td>13 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>14 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>14 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress in E-Government in the last two years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-government features/services</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated single entry portal</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of archived information (laws, policy documents, etc.)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Databases (e.g., web access to/doing)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With online transactions provision</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Conclusions

- Governments are making steady progress worldwide in embracing ICT technologies each year.

- However, at present information and services via the e-network reaches only the privileged few in the developing countries.
Survey Conclusions (cont’d)

- There is a real possibility of the digital divide widening between e-haves and e have-notes, in the developing world.

- Inequities between, and among, nations in telecommunication and human capital development pose serious constraints on the use of e-government for knowledge and empowerment of the people.
Hopeful experiments in E-Participation

- e.g. City of Tampere (Finland):
  - On-line discussion platforms for topical issues
  - System for on-line consultation about citizens’ development priorities
  - On-line facility for commenting on administration plans and their funding
  - Q&A e-booths that assure administration’s response in matter of days
  - On-line open to all facilities for content provision by citizens and group communication
  - Intensive ICT skills training program for all
However...

- Doubt persist…
  “Why should I participate in a ‘virtual’ room when I have not been taken seriously in the ‘real’ ones?”

- And, globally, governments shy away from engaging citizens on line in political debate and decision making…
Deficiencies of the current platform for genuine participation:

- **Problems with the public sphere:**
  - Access (inequality of status excludes)
  - Freedoms (speech, association, assembly)
  - Collusion of interests (concern vs. interest)

- **Problems with deliberative resources of citizens:**
  - Lack of time ("five-minute activists")
  - Lack of expertise (prevalence of "experts")
  - Lack of deliberative experiences and skills
Building new platform for genuine participation: Rules

- Culture of civic engagement
- Freedoms
- Information management (ICT-augmented)
- Gate keeping of electronic communication channels (ICT-augmented)
- Separation of public and private value
- Attentiveness and responsiveness of public officials / public administration
Building new platform for genuine participation:
Tools

- E-government applications for making citizens knowledgeable and skilled:
  - **Education** (on-line manuals, tutorials, training materials to raise literacy, including ICT literacy and skills; general knowledge; civic knowledge)
  - **Expertise** (accountability information, but also “five-minute briefs” on demand)
  - **Skills for networking and organization for political action** (manuals, tutorials, training materials)
Building new platform for genuine participation: Tools (Cont’d)

- E-government applications for making citizens connected and networked:
  - E-applications for establishing open-ended domains (networks) of shared interest
  - E-lists of existing open-ended domains (networks)
  - E-bulletin boards for posting ideas
  - Formal on-line consultation facility on policies, activities and social outcomes of policies and activities
  - On-line decision-making facilities (including e-voting)
  - Two-way e-mailing connections to politicians and civil servants
SOME SUGGESTED AREAS FOR AUDIT OF E-GOVERNMENT AS A TOOL TO EMPOWER CITIZENS AND FURTHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT-1

- The audit of current approaches and techniques in the use of ICT in various public processes as a tool to enhance participation, transparency and citizen empowerment (e-participation);

- The audit of current approaches and techniques in the use of ICT in various public processes as a tool to increase the cost-effectiveness, quality, integrity, reliability and timeliness in the delivery of services and goods, and human resource capacities;
SOME SUGGESTED AREAS FOR AUDIT OF E-GOVERNMENT AS A TOOL TO EMPOWER CITIZENS AND FURTHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT-2

- The audit of e-government as a tool towards greater cost-effectiveness in public spending and related disclosure and reporting;

- The audit of the national e-government strategy;

- The audit of e-government readiness;

- The audit of the feasibility, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of e-initiatives in developing countries;
The audit of e-management of development assistance and socio-economic programmes;

The audit of e-government as it relates to humanitarian affairs e.g. relief efforts for the Tsunami disaster;

The audit of the e-government system as a tool to minimize the risks of corruption; and

The audit of misuse or abuse of the e-government e.g. showing erroneous or inflated operational and financial results or using it as a propaganda tool.
CONCLUSION

- SAI s could play a pivotal role, through the audit of e-government, in the global community’s transition to a Knowledge Society with its potential for
  - optimizing service delivery;
  - increasing transparency;
  - encouraging the participation of constituencies;
  - strengthening people-centered governance; and
  - transform socio-economic and human development institutions
UNDESA/DPADM looks forward to collaborating with you

- Thank you