The “E-Government Strategy and Action Plan for the Caribbean” and the Establishment of
the Technical and Advisory Support Facility

Over the past five years, the Division for Public Administration and Development Management
of UNDESA, in cooperation with CARICAD, has organized five Ministerial Consultations and
High-Level Workshops on Capacity Building in Public Administration and Governance. The
Consultations, financially supported by the Government of Italy, brought together Ministers of
Caribbean governments, senior public sector managers, representatives of regional and
international organizations, leading regional and international experts, and representatives of
citizen organizations.

E-Government is being developed in the Caribbean Region in the context of the ongoing debate
and efforts related to the reform of public administration. Therefore, the Ministerial
Consultations are part of the broader initiative for administrative reform and e-government
capacity building within the Caribbean Region; and were, therefore, undertaken with due
consideration of the CARICOM ICT/Connectivity Agenda, with special reference to the section
devoted to e-government.

Such work capitalized on a number of past and current reviews, assessments and exercises in this
field conducted at the international, regional and country level, and included:

1. The carrying out of a comprehensive inventory, review and analysis of ICT and e-government
developments in the region;

2. The creation of the “E-Government in the Caribbean” web site within the United Nations
Public Administration Network (UNPAN), which is populated with these key regional resources
on e-government;

3. The development of an e-Government readiness assessment methodology initially elaborated
by UNDESA, by teaming up with representatives and experts of selected countries in the Region
and with leading world experts on ICT and e-government. The methodology, elaborated to assist
governments in the development of more relevant and informed e-government strategies and
action plans that are better aligned with good governance and public sector reform goals, is a
flexible instrument providing a choice in the depth of assessment undertaken and in this way
creating an innovative framework for approaching the issue of e-government readiness.

4. The testing of the e-Government readiness assessment methodology in nine countries of the
Region being at different stages of e-government development, namely Barbados, Belize,
Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago. Sixty-
eight surveys were completed by central government, public agencies and civil society in the nine
countries. Combined with analysis of background material, including consideration of the e-
readiness work of CARICOM that focuses on broader ICT issues, the e-government readiness
assessment has provided an overview of the challenges and opportunities facing the Region. The
diffusion of the methodology also helped to raise awareness at the national level.

In addition, key outcome of the Fifth Caribbean Ministerial Consultation on Regional
Cooperation for E-Government Capacity Building (Barbados, June 17-18, 2004), which brought
together 29 Ministers of Government and other senior officials from Caribbean countries and 41 representatives of regional and international organizations, countries outside the region, citizens and business entities, was the endorsement of the “Action-Oriented E-Government Strategy for Countries of the Caribbean Region, 2004-2007” (The Strategy), as a framework for the formulation of national and regional programmes in the area of E-Government. In embracing The Strategy, the meeting also agreed on various actions to support its implementation, including the establishment of a sub-regional Technical and Advisory Support Facility (TASF) on e-Government the services of national and regional e-government efforts.

The Technical and Advisory Support Facility (TASF) on e-Government has been operational since September 2005 and its personnel comprise the Knowledge and Information Manager and a Research Assistant.

This TASF is expected to promote the sharing of information, data and experiences, and play a catalytic, supportive role to the development of national e-government capacity in the region.

Through the sharing of information, data and experiences, the TASF, established in 2005, not only enhances regional cooperation, but also promotes the sharing of information, data and experiences, and plays a catalytic role in supporting the development of national e-Government capacity in the Region. As a result, the technical and advisory services provided increase the chances of the Caribbean to grow stronger as Region, while reducing the existing gaps with regard to the application of ICT within the Public Administration at national level.

**Products to be delivered by the TASF**

When fully operational, TASF will offer the following products:

1. **Caribbean e-Government Observatory:** This observatory will comprise, *inter alia*:
   a) a database containing key country data related to e-government readiness;
   b) national strategies and action plans;
   c) inventory of e-government projects (planned, under development or implemented) in the Caribbean, providing technical description of these e-government applications, their financial costs in terms of development and maintenance and the results / impact obtained;
   d) case studies of selected e-government applications, highlighting the main reasons for their success or failure;
   e) a database containing best practices in e-government development to describe / share technical solutions used, with special focus on low-cost solutions, including “open source” solutions;
   f) contact database of institutions and people involved with e-government for development in the Caribbean, comprising (representatives of) national agencies, NGO’s, academic institutions and key private sector firms; and
   g) online training directory (in the area of public sector reform, leadership training, project management, change management, ICT skills, and e-government for development).

2. **Database of the “E-Government for Development Initiative (EG4D)” Project Proposals:** This database is a subset of the broader EG4D Initiative. It includes an inventory and concerns a prioritized roster of summary financing proposals as well as full fledged project proposals to be implemented with the support of external financing.
3. **Caribbean Forum on e-Government**: The TASF will establish and maintain a discussion network, periodically launching specific themes to stimulate the exchange of ideas and experiences among representatives of governments, scientific community, civil society organizations, mass media and business;

4. **Guidelines and Standards** to facilitate harmonization and interoperability of E-government applications.

The above-listed products will be the content of the UNPAN-CARICAD Caribbean E-government Knowledge Bank. This bank will result from the upgrade of the UNPAN-CARICAD Caribbean E-government Web Site. Therefore, all the planned activities should aim at establishing and developing the knowledge bank.

All the information to be produced as mentioned above should be processed through the UNPAN-CARICAD information management system.

**Services to be provided by the TASF**

At the request of the Caribbean countries, TASF will also provide the following advisory services:

1. Review e-government readiness of the countries;
3. Promotion of resource mobilization and partnership building to support the implementation of these programs and projects.
4. Capacity building activities through workshops and technical advisory services to support development of e-government capacity at national and regional level.