1. BACKGROUND

As more countries begin to implement e/m-government solutions to improve service delivery to citizens, the issue of treating the citizen as a client becomes critical. Many countries view e/m-government solely as a means to automate their existing services to make them more efficient without taking into account the views of their citizens. As a result, many e/m-government solutions have not fully met their objectives; including that of transforming government to empower citizens to participate in the democratic process.

Many Arab countries and the Gulf States have started to invest more resources in developing e/m-government solutions and services. They are revamping their existing websites and portals to be more citizen-friendly by providing more information and services online. The use of mobile services in the Arab and Gulf regions has expanded tremendously over the last couple of years and thus the opportunity to link mobile to e-government solutions and services will be critical to the transformation of these countries. Several of these countries have requested assistance from UNDESA to assist them in developing policies on implementing e/m-government solutions and services.

The Division for Public Administration and Development Management is often invited by the Member States to promote technology awareness; capacity building and training; and 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 online portal, the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN), which plays an important role in knowledge sharing, as well as capacity building on e/m-government around the world.

As part of its effort to further support the e/m-government efforts of the Member States, the Knowledge Management Branch of DPADM is working towards the establishment of a UN Global Knowledge Repository on Electronic and Mobile Government (EMGKR) which will address major shortcomings in electronic and mobile government research and knowledge transfer. The EMGKR will establish mechanisms for knowledge sharing and resource development on e/m-government, including the sharing of data, resources, best practices, and establishment of consistent and reliable leading indicators for effective e/m-
government. To reach this goal, DPADM/DESA will build partnerships with regional institutions and countries to undertake joint workshops in all regions and establish networks that will provide a sustainable institutional knowledge base for the EMGKR initiative. To this end, DPADM/DESA will take advantage of the presence of e/m government representatives at the Workshop in order to develop partnerships with the Arab and Gulf regions in the effort to contribute and assist in populating the EMGKR.

To support the effort of the EMGKR, the Knowledge Management Branch of DPADM/DESA is co-organizing, with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), a three-day capacity building workshop that will aim to provide participants from countries in the Arab region with opportunities to share experiences and ideas on building capacity in knowledge management for successful e/m-government implementation.

The Workshop will be held from 18 to 20 November 2008 at UN-ESCWA Headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon. Under the theme, “Electronic/Mobile Government in Arab States: Building Capacity in Knowledge Management through Partnership”, Workshop participants will engage in in-depth discussions on a range of issues related to successful e/m-government implementation, exchange ideas and knowledge for building capacity in knowledge management, and discuss initiatives for cooperation in initiating and implementing e/m-government solutions. Arab and Gulf States will be able to share lessons learned and innovative solutions to enhancing e/m-government in the region. Consequently, South-South interaction, co-operation and partnership will play a critical role to the success of this workshop.

Participants at the Workshop will include senior policy makers, practitioners and experts on e/m-government initiatives, representatives of stakeholders responsible for e/m Government development in developing Arab and Gulf States, the Arab-UNPAN member institutions, members of academia, the private sector, as well as representatives of regional and international organizations involved in e/m-government development.

2. OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Workshop is to explore regional knowledge into the issues and challenges of e/m-government development in the Arab Region, further explore the concept of the development of the UN Global Knowledge Repository, develop partnerships for capacity building in the region and identify capacity building needs for e/m-government in the region.

Invited participants from regional institutions and countries will present papers, make presentations on the themes outlined above, as well as participate in discussions at the Workshop which has the following objectives:

- To explore the challenges and barriers to e/m-government development, review current research, including concepts and approaches of e/m-government in the Arab Region;
- To map innovative practices of e/m-government development citing best practices and lessons learnt;
- To facilitate an active dialogue between the UN, the various regional stakeholders, and Member States towards a framework of assessment on e/m-government development in Arab Region;
- To provide training on knowledge management on the development of the UN Global Knowledge Repository for the Arab Region utilizing the UNPAN tools;
- To forge partnerships for the future work on the UN Global Knowledge Repository in the Arab Region; and
- To promote regional cooperation and the regional perspective in e/m-government development, through discussions and presentations regarding the fundamentals of an enabling environment.

3. MAIN THEME AND RELATED SUB-THEMES

Under the main theme of **Building Capacity in Knowledge Management through Partnership**, the workshop will have the following five thematic areas:

Session I: e/m-Government: An Overview  
Session II: e/m-Government issues and challenges in Arab and Gulf States  
Session III: Capacity Building for e/m-government  
Session IV: Country Presentations on e/m-government practices and lessons learned  
Session V: Capacity Building for e/m-Government: The UN Global Knowledge Repository through the UNPAN tools

Sub-themes for Sessions III, IV and V include:  
(please see the Annex for a brief description of these sub-themes):

a) National e/m-government strategies, including official ICT-led development strategies (or policies, plans, etc) and implementation plans;

b) A legal and regulatory framework, which will discuss the laws and regulations that affect e/m-government development;

c) ICT infrastructure and interoperability, including IT-security, privacy protection, information exchange among agencies, and back office integration, etc.; and

d) Institutional structure and other enabling environments for e/m-development.
4. PARTICIPANTS

Participants at the Workshop will include senior policy makers, practitioners and experts on e/m government initiatives, and representatives from the UNPAN member institutions, the academia, the private sector and international organizations in the Arab Region.

5. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Workshop will be conducted in English.

All documents and papers presented at the Workshop will subsequently be posted at: http://www.unpan.org.

6. DATE AND VENUE

The meeting will be held in United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) at Beirut, Lebanon on 18 to 20 November 2008.

7. OUTPUTS

The output of the Workshop will be in the form of a report highlighting discussions and presenting a plan of action on the way forward for the EMGKR in the region. Discussion papers will contribute to the knowledge repository of the UN EMGKR. In particular, country experiences and discussion on the substantive themes of e/m-government development will be posted on the EMGKR. This will contribute towards achieving the goals of knowledge creation, knowledge development and knowledge management of the EMGKR.

The Workshop is expected to achieve the following:

a) Enhance the capacity of Arab countries on e/m-government development. The elaboration of regional case studies and best practices during the workshop will be instructive for the participants;

b) Strengthen the commitment to building partnerships for the development of UN E/M GKR especially its Arab component;

c) Increase participants’ capacity on knowledge management through UNPAN tools.

d) Enhance the capacity of participating countries to improve their delivery of online public services through the learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities during the Workshop.

e) Contribute to the ongoing KMB/DPADM/DESA initiative to build the UN EMGKR which will be further developed in partnership with multi-stakeholders in the region.
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(Annex)

**Brief Description of the Workshop Sub-themes**

**Sub-theme 1: National e/m-Government Strategies**

This sub-theme will discuss the following:

1) Official ICT-led development strategies (or policies, plans, etc)

   *Note: ‘ICT-led development strategy’ means an ICT strategy that may be incorporated into development planning, such as ICT in education, health, etc. This is different from ‘ICT strategy for development’ which focuses rather on the ICT sector for improving access, infrastructure, connectivity and usage of ICT by government, business and civil society, etc.

2) Implementation plans:
   (a) A public sector plan which specifies how public resources will be managed to achieve a development goal.
   (b) A holistic outline of the options for implementing initiatives identified and ranked in a development plan.
   (c) A plan that defines the scope and goals, the resources required of scheduled activities, scheduled activity durations, and actual project status. A high-level plan may communicate only major phases and milestones, while detailed plans include specific descriptions of the individual tasks involved and the critical path.

**Sub-theme 2: Legal and Regulatory Framework**

This sub-theme will discuss the laws and regulations that affect e/m-government development, including telecommunication legislation, privacy and security regulation, and other specific product laws (e.g. e-invoicing, e-procurement, etc.).

**Sub-theme 3: ICT Infrastructure and Interoperability**

This sub-theme will discuss a country’s ICT (Information and Communication Technology) infrastructure for information management (policies and guidelines of information collection, storage, dissemination, and usage), privacy protection, IT-security, and interoperability (information exchange and sharing among agencies), and back office integration, etc.

**Sub-theme 4: Institutional Structure and other Enabling Environment for e/m-Development**

This sub-theme will discuss:

1) Institutional Structure: organizational structure in charge of managing e/m-government policies and strategies, and the existence of Chief Information Officers (CIOs), etc.

2) Other enabling environments for e/m-development: e-leadership, and human resource development (such as training), etc.