

New global survey shows e-government supports transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

New York, 19 July 2018 – Countries in all regions of the world are continuing to make strides in their efforts to improve e-government and to provide public services online according to a new report launched by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs today.

In a 2018 ranking of countries on e-government development, **Denmark, Australia, and Republic of Korea** came out on top of a group of 40 countries, scoring very high on an index (the E-Government Development Index—EGDI), which measures countries’ use of information and communications technologies to deliver public services. The Index captures the scope and quality of online services, status of telecommunication infrastructure and existing human capacity.

This year, more countries made the top tier of the index-- index values in the range of 0.75 to 1.00—than in 2016 when there were 29 countries in that category. These countries lead also respective regional ratings in Europe, Oceania and Asia. Mauritius is leading in Africa with a global rank of 66 and the United States in the Americas with a global rank of 11.

| Country | Region | Subregion | EDGI | Rank |
|--|----------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|  Denmark | Europe | Northern Europe | 0.9150 | 1 |
|  Australia | Oceania | Australia and New Zealand | 0.9053 | 2 |
|  Republic of Korea | Asia | Eastern Asia | 0.9010 | 3 |
|  United Kingdom | Europe | Northern Europe | 0.8999 | 4 |
|  Sweden | Europe | Northern Europe | 0.8882 | 5 |
|  Finland | Europe | Northern Europe | 0.8815 | 6 |
|  Singapore | Asia | South-Eastern Asia | 0.8812 | 7 |
|  New Zealand | Oceania | Australia and New Zealand | 0.8806 | 8 |
|  France | Europe | Western Europe | 0.8790 | 9 |
|  Japan | Asia | Eastern Asia | 0.8783 | 10 |
|  United States of America | Americas | North America | 0.8769 | 11 |
|  Germany | Europe | Western Europe | 0.8765 | 12 |
|  Netherlands | Europe | Western Europe | 0.8757 | 13 |
|  Norway | Europe | Northern Europe | 0.8557 | 14 |
|  Switzerland | Europe | Western Europe | 0.8520 | 15 |

For the first time, the 2018 study also focused on **local** e-Government development in 40 cities across the world. This included assessment of municipal portals of 7 cities in Africa, 6 in Americas, 13 in Asia, 12 in Europe, and 2 Oceania with the top three leaders among them being **Moscow, Cape Town and Tallinn**.

Globally, almost **two thirds** of 193 United Nations Members States now demonstrate a high-level of e-government development with EGDI values above in the range of 0.5 and 1. The share of countries with low e-government levels, in the range of 0 to 0.25, has dropped by a significant 50 percent, from 32 countries in to 16 countries in 2018.

Yet, despite some gains and major investments in e-government development made by many countries, the **digital divide persists**. Fourteen countries out of sixteen with low scores are African and belong to the least developed countries group. The regional average index scores for countries in Africa and Oceania are significantly lower than the world average EGDI of 0.55, comprising 0.34 for Africa and 0.46 for Oceania. This indicates that the digital divide could deepen between people who have access to Internet and online services and those who do not, jeopardizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development for leaving no one behind.

In addition, a snapshot of trends in e-government development highlighted in 2018 Survey “Gearing E-Government to Support Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies” are captured below:

- European countries lead e-government development globally; the Americas and Asia share almost equal standing in high and middle e-government index levels, and many African countries continue to struggle to improve their e-government standing.
- Eight of the 11 new countries that joined the very-high performing group in 2018 are from Europe (Belarus, Greece, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Poland, Portugal and the Russian Federation) and two are from Asia (Cyprus and Kazakhstan).
- The progress in e-government development in the Americas and Asia is albeit slow, but noticeable. Two thirds of countries in Asia (31 out of 47) and almost half of countries in Americas (15 out of 35) have above the world average EGDI score of 0.55.
- Uruguay is the only Latin American country with Very-High EGDI scores, joining the other two forerunners in the Americas region in this group - United States and Canada.
- Only 4 countries out of 54 in Africa score higher than the world average EGDI of 0.55, whereas 14 countries have very low EGDI scores below 0.25. These countries are also low-income and likely to face constraints in allocating necessary resources for e-government development.
- The disparity in e-government development level is also rather high *among* the countries in both Africa and Oceania regions. Australia and New Zealand are the only two countries in Oceania that score as high as 0.9053 and 0.8806 respectively. The scores for the other 12 countries range between 0.2787 and 0.5348, which is below the world average of 0.55.
- Generally, there is a positive correlation between the country’s income level and its e-government ranking. High-income countries have very-high or high EGDI scores. This is not universal, however. Twenty-two upper middle-income and 39 lower-middle income countries have EGDI scores below the global EGDI average and 10 countries in the lower middle-income group have scores above the global EGDI average. The lower income countries, on the other hand, continue to lag behind due to relatively low level of development of all Index’s components.
- For the first time in 2018 the main contributor of EDGI scores improvement in all income groups is development of **online services**, suggesting that globally, there was a steady progress in improving e-government and public services provision online.
- All 193 Member States of the United Nations had national portals and back-end systems to automate core administrative tasks, and 140 provide at least one transactional service online. The trend of improvement in

transactional online services is strong and consistent in all assessed categories with the three most commonly used services being payment for utilities (140 countries), submitting income taxes (139 countries), and registration of new business (126 countries).

- Increasingly, more countries provide online services targeted to the most vulnerable groups. From the regional perspective, Europe continues to lead in online service delivery for all vulnerable groups reaching almost universal coverage across the region or over 80 per cent of all European countries.
- The number of countries providing online services using emails, SMS/RSS feed updates, mobile Apps and downloadable forms has been increasing in all sectors. For instance, up to 176 countries provide archived information online compared to 154 in 2016.

The UN E-Government Survey report looks at how e-government can facilitate integrated policies and services across the three dimensions of sustainable development, and is produced every two years by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It is the only global report that assesses the e-government development status of the 193 UN Member States. It serves as a tool for countries to learn from each other, identify areas of strength and challenges in e-government and shape their policies and strategies in this area. It is also aimed at facilitating discussions of intergovernmental bodies, including the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, on issues related to e-government and development and to the critical role of ICT in development.

Read the full 2018 UN E-Government Survey: bit.ly/UNEgov2018

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