

Empowering Digital Transformation: Building National and Local Capacities in South and East Africa

South and East Africa Digital Governance Forum



South and East Africa
Digital Governance Forum

Crystal Room

[Day 1 – 30 September 2024](#)

[Day 2 – 1 October 2024](#)

[Day 3 – 2 October 2024](#)

[Session Descriptions](#)

Day 1 – 30 September 2024	
09:30-10:00	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Delfina Soares, Director, the United Nations University Operating Unit, Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV) <p>Facilitator: Prof. Luís Barbosa, Deputy Director, the United Nations University Operating Unit, Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV)</p>
10:00-11:00	<p>Workshop Agenda Overview and setting the scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro, Chief, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) • Participants introductions and Q&A <p>Moderator: Mr. Deniz Susar, Governance and Public Administration Officer, (UN DESA)</p>
11:00-11:05	Group photo
11:05-11:30	Coffee Break

11:30-13:00	<p>Session 1 Dialogue – Opportunities and Challenges in Developing, Assessing and Monitoring Digital Governance Progress in South and East Africa: Drivers, Realities, and Common Concerns</p> <p>The session will discuss Global Digital Compact and its implementation in the region. Below are stakeholders who indicated interest, however everyone participating in the workshop is expected to contribute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Eddie Muguna, Government Digital Transformation Specialist, e-Government Technology Unit, Zimbabwe (GDC Objective 1) ● Mr. Khiba Masiu, Director ICT, Ministry of Information Communications, Science Technology and Innovation, Lesotho (GDC Objective 2) ● Eng. Abdullahi Guled Ibrahim, Cybersecurity advisor, Ministry of Communications and Technology, Somalia (GDC Objective 3) ● Mr. Constantino Sotomane, Member of the Board of National Institute of Information and Communication Technology (INTIC), Mozambique (GDC Objective 4) ● Mr. Abdou-rachid Idris Nour, Technical advisor in charge of communication, Ministry of Communication, Djibouti (GDC Objective 5) <p>Moderator: Ms. Sorene Assefa, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA)</p>
13:00-14:30	<p>Lunch (Central Buffet)</p>
14:30-16:00	<p>Session 1 Dialogue (continued) – Opportunities and Challenges in Developing, Assessing and Monitoring Digital Governance Progress in South and East Africa: Drivers, Realities, and Common Concerns</p> <p>Global Digital Compact Leading Questions (Continued):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Admaswork Mamo, National Data Development Co-ordination Desk Head, Ministry of Innovation and Technology, Ethiopia, (GDC Objective 1) ● Ms. Abia Shigwedha, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Namibia (GDC Objective 2) ● Mr. Llanley Simpson, Director: Digital Economy Capabilities Research, RSA Department: Science & Innovation, South Africa, (GDC Objective 5) <p>More about GDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brief presentation including video and Slides ● 30 Minute Discussion: Breakout Group per GDC objective (5 min each +5 min to Rapporteur) <p>Moderator: Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro, Chief, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)</p> <p>Rapporteur: Ms. Angelica Zundel, Consultant, (UN DESA)</p>
16:00-16:30	<p>Coffee Break</p>

16:30-18:00	<p>Session 2 – People-centred Digital Governance Strategies</p> <p><u>Design of people-centred digital governance strategies</u>, Dr. Delfina Soares, Director (UNU-EGOV)</p> <p><u>National E-Government Toolkit for digital governance strategies</u>, Ms. Angelica Zundel, Consultant (UN DESA)</p> <p><u>Strategies to leverage AI for people-centred cities</u>, Dr. Tupokigwe Isagah, Researcher (UNU-EGOV)</p> <p>followed by a round table with (Everyone participating in the workshop is expected to contribute):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Meick Sandro da Costa Lopes Afonso, Director General, the Institute for Administrative Modernization, the Institute of Administrative Modernization (IMA), Angola ● Dr. Catherine Mkude, Head of Department, Communication Technology Lecturer, The Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania ● Eng. Jaha Mvulla, Manager for Research, Innovation and Training, e-Government Authority (e-GA), Tanzania <p>Moderator: Prof. Luís Barbosa, Deputy Director, the United Nations University Operating Unit, Policy-Driven Electronic Governance, (UNU-EGOV)</p> <p>Rapporteur: Dr. Tupokigwe Isagah, Researcher, the United Nations University Operating Unit, Policy-Driven Electronic Governance, (UNU-EGOV)</p>
<p>Day 2 – 1 October 2024</p>	
9:30-10:00	<p>Welcome</p>
10:00-12:00	<p>Session 3 –Local Online Service Index (LOSI) of the United Nations E-Government Survey</p> <p>Introductory talk</p> <p>Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro, Chief, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prof. Maria Alexandra Viegas Cortez da Cunha, Professor, Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil & Dr. Manuella Ribeiro, Information Analyst, the Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society (Cetic. br), Brazil & Dr. Erico Przeybilovicz, Research Associate, the United Nations University Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), Brazil ● Ms. Devanshi Shah, Research Associate, CEPT University, India ● Ms. Sabrine Dachraoui, The Tunisian eGovernance Society, Tunisia ● Ms. Angelica Zundel, Consultant, (UN DESA) ● Mr. Dimitrios Sarantis, Senior Research Analyst, the United Nations University (UNU-EGOV) ● Dr. Catherine Mkude, The Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania ● Dr. Saleem Zoughbi, Senior Research Consultant, (UNU-EGOV) <p>Moderator: Mr. Deniz Susar, Governance and Public Administration Officer, (UN DESA)</p>

	Rapporteur: Mr. Dimitrios Sarantis , Senior Research Analyst, the United Nations University (UNU-EGOV)
12:00-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	<p>Session 4 - Town Hall Session: Strengthening Regional Participation through International Cooperation in Digital Governance – Perspectives from Southeast Africa and Beyond</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reflections and thoughts</p> <p>Regional & International Speakers (30 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ambassador Mr. David Claude Pierre: (video) Permanent Representative of AU to Southern Africa Region, COMESA and SADC 2. Ms. Eva Scholtes, Advisor for the Data Governance in Africa Initiative, GIZ, Germany 3. Mr. Gianluca Carlo Misuraca, Academic and Expert in Digital Governance, Social Innovation and Artificial Intelligence, EU perspective 4. Mr. Richard Nzuki Nzyoki, Management Information Analyst, IDRC Canada, Digital Information Operations (DSIG), Kenya 5. Dr. Mohammed Agbali, Senior Manager, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Nigeria <p>Interventions from participants (60 minutes)</p> <p>Topics of discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional Cooperation 2. Looking at Digital Governance in a Different Angle 3. Priority Challenges for Digital Africa <p>Moderator: Dr. Saleem Zoughbi, Senior Research Consultant, (UNU-EGOV) Rapporteur: Dr. Tupokigwe Isagah, Researcher, the United Nations University Operating Unit, Policy-Driven Electronic Governance, (UNU-EGOV)</p>
15:00-16:00	<p>Adoption of Key Messages Finalised Draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Sorene Assefa, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA) ● Ms. Angelica Zundel, Consultant, (UN DESA) ● Mr. Dimitrios Sarantis, Senior Research Analyst, the United Nations University (UNU-EGOV) ● Dr. Tupokigwe Isagah, Researcher, the United Nations University Operating Unit, Policy-Driven Electronic Governance, (UNU-EGOV) <p>Moderator: Mr. Deniz Susar, Governance and Public Administration Officer, (UN DESA)</p>
16:00-16:30	<p>SEADGov Forum Closing Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Mactar Seck, Chief of Section, Programme Management, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro, Chief, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) • Mr. Tshilidzi Marwala, UNU Rector and UN Under-Secretary, (UN)
16:30-19:00	Break (participants are invited to join ICEGOV 2024) 
19:00-20:00	ICEGOV Opening Ceremony
20:00-20:30	ICEGOV Keynote Lecture
20:30	ICEGOV Welcome Reception
Day 3 – 2 October 2024	
8:30-9:00	Welcome
9:00-9:30	Digital Cooperation: International Governance of Emerging Technologies & the Global Digital Compact, by Tshilidzi Marwala, UNU Rector and UN Under-Secretary
9:30-10:30	High-level Panel 1
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-13:00	PAPER SESSION 1 Trust and Ethical Digital Governance for the World We Want (1) PAPER SESSION 2 Digital transformation and innovation in the Public Sector (1) PAPER SESSION 3 New perspectives of digital governance measurement, assessment, and monitoring (1)
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-16:00	United Nations E-Government Survey 2024 - RUBY ROOM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Vincenzo Aquaro, Chief, Digital Government Branch, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) • Mr. Deniz Susar, Governance and Public Administration Officer, (UN DESA) • Eng. Abdulrahman Almutairi, Vice Governor, Strategy and Partnerships, the Digital Government Authority, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia <p>Moderator: Dr. Delfina Soares, Director, the United Nations University Operating Unit, Policy-Driven Electronic Governance, (UNU-EGOV)</p>
16:00-16:30	Coffee Break
16:30-18:30	PAPER SESSION 4 Smart Sustainable Cities and Communities for People PAPER SESSION 5 Social media and digital platforms PAPER SESSION 6 Focus on the Global South Digital Transformation (1)

Session Descriptions

Session 1: Opportunities and Challenges in Developing, Assessing and Monitoring Digital Governance Progress in South and East Africa: Drivers, Realities, and Common Concerns

Digital transformation is rapidly advancing in South and East Africa, bringing both opportunities and challenges. While countries in the region have made strides in areas like e-government and data governance, they still face hurdles such as limited digital infrastructure, digital literacy gaps, and outdated regulations. The COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the urgent need for strong digital governance frameworks to maintain service continuity.

[The Global Digital Compact \(GDC\)](#) offers a valuable framework to address these challenges. By focusing on objectives like closing digital divides, expanding digital economy inclusion, fostering a safe digital space, advancing equitable data governance, and improving AI governance, the GDC provides a roadmap for shaping regional progress.

This session will explore the drivers and challenges of digital governance in the region, using the GDC as a guide for aligning efforts with global standards.

Session Flow:

1. Introduction (10 minutes): Moderator's opening remarks and participant introduction
2. Keynote Speakers (25 minutes): Moderator opens the floor for discussion on the following questions:
 - **GDC objective 1: Closing Digital Divides**
What key strategies can be implemented to close all digital divides, ensuring that marginalised communities benefit from digital transformation and accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals?
 - **GDC objective 2: Expanding Inclusion in the Digital Economy**
How can we expand inclusion and ensure equitable access to the benefits of the digital economy, particularly for underserved populations?
 - **GDC objective 3: Fostering a Safe and Inclusive Digital Space**
What steps can be taken to foster a digital space that is inclusive, open, safe, and secure, while respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights?
 - **GDC objective 4: Equitable Data Governance**
How can we advance responsible, equitable, and interoperable data governance frameworks that protect user rights and promote transparency and accountability?
 - **GDC objective 5: International Governance of AI**
What approaches should be adopted to enhance the international governance of Artificial Intelligence to ensure its development benefits humanity, and how can we address the ethical, social, and regulatory challenges associated with AI?
3. Discussion: (40 minutes) Moderator opens the floor

4. Moderator summarising key messages (15 minutes)

Session 2: People-centred Digital Governance Strategies

The session will focus on the role, design and implementation of national, local and sectoral Digital Governance strategies to build people-centred government ecosystems that are more efficient in terms of public service delivery, more participatory for citizens and communities, more transparent and scrutinised, and even more proactive.

The session will start with a presentation of a very recent UNU-Habitat report on “Global Assessment of Responsible AI in cities” which provides a number of recommendations to leverage AI for people-centred cities. The report is co-authored by UNU-EGOV and will be presented by a member of the corresponding research team, Dr Tupokigwe Isagah. This will introduce the focus on people-centred strategies.

Then, the session will continue with a presentation by Dr Delfina Soares on the *Design of People-centred Digital Governance Strategies*, based on UNU-EGOV extensive experience, followed by a round table addressing the following questions:

1. Current and anticipated impact of strategic planning informing the diverse national and regional strategies that have been put forward for the last five years in South and East Africa. What success stories are there? What good practices can be identified? What problems and challenges arise?
2. It is all agreed that regional cooperation in the design, implementation, and monitoring of digital governance strategies is very conducive to successful development. What do you think are the most critical obstacles for regional cooperation in the Southeast African region?
3. There is an essential and important role and achievements of the global efforts of regional and international organisations like the African Union, the UN, the World Bank, etc. through its digital transformation development. Can you elaborate on priorities such as digital infrastructure and accessibility, as a prerequisite to drive Africa’s development, and inclusive growth?

Session 3: Local Online Service Index (LOSI) of the United Nations E-Government Survey

This session will explore strategies to strengthen local capacities for digitization, with a focus on advancing Sustainable Development Goal 11. The discussion will emphasise the importance of equipping local governments with the knowledge and technical support needed to enhance their ability to deliver inclusive online public services.

Session Flow (120 minutes):

1. **Introduction to LOSI and 2024 Results** – UN DESA will present the latest findings and introduce the Local Online Service Index (LOSI). (10 minutes)
2. **Overview of the LOSI Network** – Learn about the LOSI Network, an initiative by UN DESA and UNU-EGOV to assess and improve local government portals. As urban populations grow, these portals play a crucial role in making cities more livable and responsive. The LOSI methodology, applied to the most populous cities in 193 UN Member States, aims to maximise reach and impact. Institutions with the capacity and resources are invited to partner with UN DESA and UNU-EGOV to expand LOSI’s application within countries. (10 minutes)
3. **Introduction to the Local E-Government Toolkit** – Aligned with SDGs 9, 11, 16, and 17, this toolkit is designed to address common challenges in implementing effective local e-government. It offers comprehensive training modules on key aspects of the LOSI, including institutional frameworks, technology, participation, services, and content provision. Participants will gain practical insights into local government digitalization, measurement, and evaluation, as well as best practices for enhancing local e-government initiatives. (10 minutes)
4. **Application of LOSI** - Case studies showcasing how LOSI has been implemented in these countries. (20 minutes)
5. **Future Plans for Africa** – Discussing plans to apply LOSI in African countries, including Egypt, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda. (20 minutes)
6. **Discussion:** (40 minutes) Moderator opens the floor
7. **Moderator summarising** key messages (10 minutes)

To inform the forum and facilitate targeted discussions, we suggest participants respond to the following questions:

1. **Core Services:** What are the essential online services that local governments in your country should prioritise to meet the needs of citizens?
2. **Partnerships:** Does your country have established collaborations with organisations or agencies to promote local e-government? If so, please specify.
3. **Evaluation Framework:** Is there a system in place to assess the performance of local e-government initiatives in your country? If yes, please provide details.
4. **Language Accessibility:** What are the official languages in your country, and do local government websites cater to all language groups?
5. **Digital Divide:** What are the primary challenges hindering local e-government development in your country, such as digital literacy, infrastructure, or access to technology?
6. **Digital Identity:** Do local governments employ digital authentication methods for online service delivery? If so, please describe the system.
7. **Participation:** How do local government websites facilitate participation and engagement? Please provide examples of e-participation activities.

8. **Improvement Areas:** Based on your assessment, what are the key areas for improvement in local government websites within your country?
9. **LOSI Framework:** Has your country adopted the LOSI methodology to evaluate local e-government? Are you interested in participating in the LOSI Network?

By providing comprehensive and insightful responses to these questions, you will contribute to a productive discussion and help shape strategies for enhancing local e-government. Thank you in advance.

Session 4: Town Hall Session: Strengthening Regional Participation through International Cooperation in Digital Governance – Perspectives from Southeast Africa and Beyond

This session will explore the role of major international corporations active in the African region in enhancing regional cooperation and participation in digital governance. The discussion will focus on the practices of international and regional cooperation, with a particular emphasis on Southeast Africa and broader African contexts.

The session is designed in a Town Hall format to encourage an open and dynamic exchange of ideas. It will feature one or two prominent speakers from international organisations, alongside senior representatives from African countries, and a senior UN official, preferably from UNDESA. A key theme of the discussion will be the Global Digital Compact, contextualised to the African region.

Regional cooperation

1. How to build strong cooperation among continent-based think-tank Fora Coordination
2. Political decisions, technical capabilities and human resources criteria that could work in promoting cooperation, Coordination or partnerships
3. A serious look at the primary enabler for regional cooperation: Financial Resources: Funding, Investment or crowdfunding?

Looking at digital governance in a different angle

1. Local government versus central government: Are they two or one?
2. Replace city governance with regional and sub regional digital governance? What about rural governance, tribal, and other habitat urban @models@?
3. Empowering the people: what effective strategies could be selected:

Priority challenges for digital Africa

1. New technologies: Do you think that AI can pave the way for other digital trends? Any potential competition to AI in the near future?

2. Impact of satellite data, drone's applications, intelligent analytics, expert digital governments and other innovative usage of technology for Sustainable Development?
3. Governments capabilities to sustain level of digital government progress: for example, how can a digital government sustain its successful improvement and not fall back when projects are completed?