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Online connectivity improves, but digital inclusivity remains a challenge, new UN survey shows

Denmark, Finland and South Korea top the 2022 UN e-government ranking

New York, 28 September 2022 – Despite multiple crises of the past two years, countries and municipalities have remained committed to pursuing digital government strategies – many implemented specifically to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, many have fallen short in providing adequate online services, according to the 2022 edition of the *United Nations E-Government Survey – The Future of Digital Government* released today.

Denmark, Finland and the Republic of Korea lead the 2022 digital government ranking of the 193 United Nations Member States, scoring the highest when it comes to the scope and quality of online services, status of telecommunication infrastructure and existing human capacity. Runners-up are New Zealand, Sweden, Iceland, Australia, Estonia, the Netherlands, the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Japan and Malta.

Owing to remarkable improvements in telecommunications infrastructure and human capacity development, the global E-Government Development Index (EGDI) average has increased overall. Eight countries have moved to the high EGDI group for the first time: Belize, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, Lebanon, Nepal, Rwanda, Tajikistan and Zambia. Overall, 68.91 per cent of Member States are at the high or very high EGDI level.

While the data shows general increases in online services for vulnerable groups, evidence of pervasive digital divides is stark. All of the countries with the lowest EGDI rankings are those in special and developing situations. A range of human-centred issues related to access, affordability, general abilities, digital literacy and language are explored in the *2022 Survey*.

The recent Transforming Education Summit also shone a spotlight on the role of digital learning. The *2022 Survey* shows that the number of countries providing digital services in the education sector has increased by 22 per cent, from 104 to 114 countries. Widespread adoption of digital solutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has paved the way for this development, albeit with uneven progress across different regions and different income levels. The recent summit placed a spotlight on the critical role that equitable access to digital learning can play in advancing sustainable development.

“The Survey results highlight that governments have remained focused on developing digital services and infrastructures, despite the global challenges of recent years. Fulfilling our vision for leaving no one behind will require us to leave no one offline in the hybrid digital future,” said Mr. Li Junhua, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.



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The *2022 Survey* shows that digital technologies allowed governments to play a key role in addressing the challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. All regions implemented digital measures, with a majority focusing on distance learning and vaccination services, and others also providing telehealth and online scheduling for medical tests. The proportion of countries offering all four types of services is highest in Europe (90 per cent), followed by Asia and the Americas (71 per cent each), Oceania (65 per cent) and Africa (40 per cent).

The *2022 Survey* also continued its study of e-government development at the local level. Despite a digital performance gap between city portals and their national counterparts, most cities have improved their Local Online Service Index scores through greater access to important resources such as a highly skilled workforce, a broad knowledge and skill base, and a dedicated public budget.

The *2022 Survey* calls on Governments to strategize and invest more in long-term national digital transformation plans. Meaningful connectivity must be guaranteed for all to help prepare for future crises and shocks. Advances in technology and e-government must ultimately serve the wider goal of supporting sustainable human development—and leaving no one behind.

About the United Nations E-Government Survey

The United Nations E-Government Survey, published by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is prepared over a two-year period following an established methodology. It looks at how digital government can facilitate integrated policies and services across 193 UN Member States. The Survey supports countries' efforts to provide effective, accountable and inclusive digital services to all, bridge the digital divide and leave no one behind. In the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, the E-Government Survey is recognized as a key ranking, mapping and measuring tool, supporting the digital transformation of countries.

Following the global launch of the 2022 Survey on 28 September, webinars and regional information sessions will be held to share further insights and key findings at the global, regional and local levels. The Survey will be made available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, thanks to the collaboration with external partners.

For more information: <https://publicadministration.un.org/en/Research/UN-e-Government-Surveys>

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