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Statement

Press Briefing

Launch of the United Nations E-Government Survey 2022

28 September 2022 Wednesday, 12:30 pm to 13:00 pm

Venue: SG Spokesperson's Briefing Room

Hello everybody.

Good afternoon

It gives me great pleasure to join everyone at this Press Briefing today to officially launch the United Nations E-Government Survey 2022 – the leading global assessment of the digital government landscape across all 193 Member States of the United Nations.

Let me show you what it looks like – this is the publication and it is very very dense but very interesting. The Survey ranks how countries perform, when it comes to delivering digital services and engaging people online in public affairs.

This edition of the Survey is launched amidst and I don't have to tell you today's cascading and intersecting crises – from the COVID-19 pandemic to the worsening climate crisis, from persistent digital divides to the spread of

disinformation and misinformation, and the dire situations of poverty, hunger and social insecurity.

On one hand, technology is rapidly changing the way people live, work and communicate. On the other hand, increased digitalization has brought its own challenges, such as digital ethics, privacy concerns and cybersecurity.

You will recall the Secretary-General, in his address to the General Assembly last Wednesday, he stressed with a rather solemn tone, and I quote “Divides are growing deeper. Inequalities are growing wider”, and he also said the “lack of guardrails around promising new technologies to heal disease, connect people and expand opportunities”. These were the concerns.

The 2022 Survey has revealed new a lot of new findings: I will call here six of them

1. The digital government evolution has contributed to **an irreversible transformation of institutions and public administrations, that you know already probably.**
2. **Technology is also blurring the lines between the physical and digital spheres.** There is no longer a clear distinction or separation between what is government and what is e-government.

3. The global E-Government Development Index has increased overall, and that's good news **but there remain deep divides** especially in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, the least developed countries and the small island developing States.
4. The pandemic has forced **Governments to rethink the role of digitalization, it's not enough at all - it has to be there from the beginning basically** and has compelled them to deliver innovative digital solutions for more responsiveness, agility, and resilience
5. **The future is not digital but hybrid** – I like this one because it puts emphasis on the people - people are still there, we cannot be 100% digital different forms of digital divides are not only persistent but have been amplified because of pandemic, including gender divides, urban versus rural divides, and the digital age divide – the young versus the older , and persons with disabilities.
6. **Digital government is key to the future of Government** – in preparing for **future crises and shocks** that we anticipate or we have yet to foresee, and **wars and emergencies** as we witness how e-government plays a role in Ukraine. And on this, you will find in the survey – a box 5.1 with more about how in Ukrain secured its e-gouvernement functions

Colleagues,

To conclude, Fulfilling the UN's vision in leaving no one behind will require us to leave no one offline.

Successful digital governments are shifting from being ever-present in people's lives, to becoming rather invisible, and at the same time, they offer trusted, automated services which are accessible anytime from anywhere at people's convenience, respecting privacy and personal data protection. These are the successful ones of course, not everybody is there yet.

This approach helps to re-imagine, re-design, re-engineer and re-think the ways in which Governments serve, collaborate and interact with their citizens and their constituencies.

In the Secretary-General's report on Our Common Agenda, the urgency for protecting digital public goods – including the use of open data and open source in digital government was highlighted clearly.

The Survey will contribute to the Secretary-General's Global Digital Compact which aims to create together an open, free and secure digital future for all.

In closing, I wish to highlight that the 2022 edition of the UN E-Government will be available not only in English but all other official languages as well, thanks to our partners.

I believe the Survey will continue its tradition over the past two decades and continue to evolve as a leading benchmarking reference on e-government and a policy tool for decision-makers. I thank you for your attention
