

Welcome remarks of the Secretary General of D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, H.E. Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, at the Capacity Building Workshop on new Approaches to E-Government for SDG implementation organized by United Nations Department of Social Affairs in Collaboration with D-8 Organization, held virtually from 15-16 March 2022

Mr. Juwang Zhu, Director, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA),

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel delighted to welcome you all to this Capacity Building workshop jointly organized by the D8 Organization for Economic Cooperation and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), on New Approach to E-Government for SDGs Implementation.

Let me begin by thanking our partner, UNDESA, through its division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, for deeming it fit to collaborate with D-8 Organization to organize this very important event. This workshop marks the beginning of our cooperation with UNDESA and I hope this partnership will continue and grow to our mutual benefits. We hope that this workshop will contribute to enhancing the capacity of the participants and consequently accelerate the digital transformation process in the D-8 Member States, especially in the framework of the implementation of the SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The D8 Organization is a global arrangement and its member states are spread over three continents. This leads to the challenge of geographical distance between its

member states. The D8 member countries are also at unequal level of development with regard to E-Government. According to the UN E-Government survey of 2020, Malaysia and Turkey are classified in the very high group, while Indonesia, Bangladesh, Egypt and Iran are classified in the high group. Nigeria and Pakistan are classified in the middle group. It is in this connection that this workshop represents a golden opportunity for D-8 member states, and participants alike, to learn from each other and exchange views, with guidance from experts from UNDESA, on best practices on e-governance policies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The advantages of E- Government cannot be overemphasized. The benefits of e-government are crystallized in **more efficiency, enhanced service delivery to the citizens and more transparency and accountability of government.** The fast-evolving technologies have transformed the traditional ways of doing things across all domains of government and the 4th Industrial revolution has the potential to change our societies and enhance our ways of life in a fast pace.

However, we should be mindful of the challenges that come with E-government. The challenges are crystallized in the area of accessibility, as e-government may not be accessible by all citizens, especially those who are living in remote areas or have low rates of literacy and income. In this circumstance, E-Government may reinforce existing inequalities in the society and widen the digital divides within the same country as well as among countries. Also, e-government could adversely affect jobs and economies. Therefore, governments should be prepared to come up with adaptive policies and regulations and sufficient support for their citizenry to be re-skilled to address the challenges that may be caused by E-Government policies.

Distinguished participants,

We in the D8 Secretariat are of the view that benefitting from E-government is critical for our member states to achieve accelerated social and economic development. We require international and multi-stake holder cooperation to benefit from the opportunities presented by E- Government. We have also come to realize that E-Government could also help the D8 by introducing new strategies and innovation approaches to the implementation of the D-8 2030 Decennial Road Map.

Finally, I want to thank all participants for having the opportunity to take part in this capacity building workshop. I hope that the knowledge acquired would translate to something positive by further improving the way we do our work at the organization, in the long run. I also thank the Resources persons for their valuable time and for their dedication.

I wish you all fruitful discussions and I thank you for your attention.