

# United Nations Development Programme



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Resilient nations.*

09<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Dear Raul,

## SWAZILAND E-GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME

In 2004, UNDP in collaboration with OSISA supported the Government of Swaziland to conduct an e-readiness assessment. The focus of the assessment was to explore the challenges and opportunities that exist for E-governance in Swaziland. Although the report has helped influenced the establishment of an ICT Ministry in 2008, very limited progress was made towards implementing the e-readiness recommendations of the report.

However, the Government has revisited the recommendation made in the 2004 report and is giving priority to e-governance as platform for improving efficiency in service delivery. In April 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat assisted the Government to develop an E-governance strategy. This was informed by a scoping mission conducted in October 2011. Government has further requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist the country to conduct an assessment of the ICT infrastructure. In order to facilitate the process, the Government has established a technical team comprised of representative of relevant Ministries with a mandate of leading and guiding the implementation of the E-governance strategy.

Meanwhile, in line with its renewed commitment, the Government has initiated some pilot E-governance projects at the MTN Mobile Company; Swaziland Revenue Authority; Swaziland Electricity Company; Swaziland Water Services Corporation; and a new paperless Cabinet Offices is also being established by the Prime Minister's Office, emulating the Rwanda concept.

During the presentation of my credential early in April 2012, the Prime Minister requested the UNDP, as a key ally and trusted partner to review and provide technical guidance towards the implementation of the E-Governance strategy and projects. Following this request, the CO supported by Mr. Gonzalo Aramayo from the UNDP South Africa Office had a strategic meeting with the Government E-Governance technical team. During the meeting, the UNDP approach to E-Governance was presented. The technical team acknowledged the concept and concurred that it resonated with the aspirations of the team and the majority of the people consulted.

Some of the critical challenges faced by the Swaziland Government with regards to its ICT and E-Governance strategy include weak institutional arrangements; inadequate NIC Policy framework; Liberalization of Telecom Industry; Coordination of ICT related initiatives; legitimizing of the Steering Committee; fragmented ICT infrastructure and Government Fiscal challenges. Furthermore, the technical team established by Government to steer the processes has limited capacity and expertise on E-Governance.

During the meeting with the E-Governance technical team, the following areas of collaboration were identified for possible UNDP assistance: namely:

Capacity building of the Technical team to strengthen their ability to provide the appropriate guidance to the implementation of the project.

- Review the current E-Governance strategy scoping report and provide technical advice – this input will contribute towards the white paper being developed. .
- Place a Technical Expert for at least three/ six months to support the establishment of the E- Government Cabinet and Parliament.
- Strengthen capacity of cabinet on ICT.
- Support the pilot of an E- Governance at sector level.
- Support with the development of relevant policies and legislation for E- Governance and the review of the National Information and Communication policy.
- Capacity building of the end user (public sector) and citizens on E-Governance.
- Support the development of school curriculum for ICT in School.
- Marketing and Communication strategy on E- Governance.

The CO views the request from the Prime Minister's Office to support E-Governance as an opportunity for deepening our Governance Programme in the country, as well as strengthen our advocacy for democratic reform, and has potential of promoting transparency and accountability. It will also support our strategy and upstream focus, and would serve as an entry point to support the various public sector reform process engaged at different levels.

In light of the strategic nature of this intervention, we kindly seek your guidance on how to engage the Government on this important initiative. As you are aware, the Swaziland country office has limited resources, we therefore wish to explore opportunities of accessing resource from the Thematic Trust Funds and other potential donors to address these emerging national priorities. Your further advice and assistance on this matter will be much appreciated.

Yours Sincerely



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