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Written Message

Gambia Workshop

**“Capacity Development Workshop on National Data Governance Framework
in The Gambia”**

4-5 February, 2025
Banjul, the Gambia

*His Excellency Lamin Jabbi, Minister of Ministry of Communications & Digital
Economy (MOCDE),*

My colleague Mr. Karl Frédéric Paul, UN Resident Coordinator of Gambia,

Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), I welcome all of you to the Capacity Development and Consultation Workshop on National Data Governance Framework in The Gambia.

We are honoured to co-organize this important Workshop in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy of The Gambia (MOCDE).

[Gambia's e-government development and today's context of data governance]

Data from the UN E-Government Survey demonstrates that significant improvements have been made by the Gambia in its digital development.

The Gambia has faced challenges in global digital rankings, moving from 181st place in 2020 to 174th place in 2022 on the E-Government Development Index (EGDI)., In 2024, the ranking slipped back to 181st place.

However, the government is making commendable efforts to enhance its digital systems. This includes initiatives such as organizing the Data Governance Workshop in collaboration with the African Union last year, as well as this current workshop. Guided by its e-Government Strategy (2020–2024), The Gambia has also developed a Government Cloud Strategy (2023–2027) to improve service delivery and better meet the needs of its citizens.

The dedication and hard work required to lead the country in this direction of digital development is truly admirable, and a testament to the leadership and governance in place.

Of course, significant challenges remain, including unreliable internet connections, inadequate infrastructure, limited human capital, persistent digital divides, and low levels of e-government literacy, challenges faced also by some of the most developed countries. However, the ongoing efforts and initiatives are a step in the right direction, paving the way for meaningful progress.

This is where the thoughtful integration of digital technologies into public governance can become such an enabling and formidable force.

Distinguished Participants,

Data is a critical resource for Governments, and its effective governance is essential in both the public and the private sectors.

Data is integral to every sector and function of government. Most institutions would find it difficult, if not impossible, to function effectively without data.

As we advance into the era of artificial intelligence (AI), the significance of data becomes even more pronounced.

High-quality, well-governed data is the foundation on which AI systems are built. AI algorithms depend on vast amounts of data to learn, make predictions, and generate insights that can drive local innovation and efficacy in public services.

It is in this context that UN DESA is implementing a capacity development project on “Developing institutional capacities for digital data management and cooperation to advance progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals”.

Funded by the UN Peace and Development Fund, this Project aims to support countries in developing national data governance framework for ensuring data quality, access and usage, and for enhancing data security and personal data privacy, through consultation and collaboration.

With your active participation, we aim to achieve these two objectives:

- Firstly, to build and develop institutional and individual capacities, in understanding and developing digital data policies and strategies, and in supporting the national digital transformation in The Gambia.
- Second, the Workshop will also serve as a consultation platform to explore and advance a national data management and governance framework in The Gambia.

We are grateful for the participation of senior officials and experts, from among government and non-government stakeholders, taking time out of your busy schedule to join us.

Together, let us have an honest, candid and action-oriented discussion about the current challenges and opportunities to advance digital data governance – to tap on the vast potential of data for sustainable development in the Gambia.

I wish all an engaging and fruitful workshop.

Thank you.
