

**KEY NOTE SPEECH BY DAVID SAWE, ADVISOR ON
e-GOVERNMENT AT THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE –
PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT, WHEN OPENING
THE I.S.T. AFRICA WORKSHOP ON POLICY AND
LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR e-GOVERNMENT ON THE
28TH FEBRUARY 2007, COSTECH, DAR ES SALAAM.**

- Director of Information and Documentation, Mr. Theo Mlaki
- IST-Africa Coordinators, Paul and Miriam Cunningham
- Workshop Organizers
- Distinguished Participants,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is for me a great honour to have this opportunity to address you at the start of your workshop on Policy and Legal Framework for e-Government, which to my knowledge is the first one of its kind in Tanzania.

2. Allow me to start by welcoming on behalf of the Government of Tanzania, and on my own behalf, our esteemed guests from the International Information Management Corporation Ltd (IIMC) who are also coordinators of IST-Africa's project on the Regional Impact on Information Society Technologies in Africa. Ladies and Gentlemen, our presence together here today reflect the support that this project has from our Government. Let us

therefore keep in mind that its outcomes will be closely monitored by many more people than just us within this conference room.

3. As some of you know, e-government is among the responsibilities of the President's Office for Public Service Management, where I work. This workshop is very valuable to us, as it provides for sharing of experience on strategies to create a suitable policy and legal framework for implementing e-government initiatives in our country. It is a pleasure to note that your workshop programme goes beyond mere creation of awareness, and includes discussions on methodologies and tools, with case studies and detailed presentations on the varied aspects of e-Government and Cyberlaw.

4. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are surely all aware that given the context of global competitiveness, Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are unavoidable reality of life in the 21st Century. In this day and age, not only private companies but even NGOs, village communities and national governments are competing against one another for resources, and especially for access to knowledge through which resources can be obtained.

5. For a country's private sector to compete against companies elsewhere, the quality of services they receive from their public servants must sustain competitiveness. Much as I'm tempted at this moment to give a couple of quick examples of this, I will refrain in case I pre-empt something that the workshop organisers may present to you in more detail.

6. But I can assure you that Tanzania's Government is aware of this, and has been taking measures to respond in a number of ways. In our Office, back in 1993 the predecessor of the current Public Service Reform Programme introduced the use of ICT to improve a chaotic situation at the time, with ghost-workers, ghost-payments, ghost-retrenchees, and even ghost-paystations. It is a continuing effort that has generated significant results over the years.

7. Of course, so long as some people collude to defraud their employers, it will be a continuing challenge to prevent and detect their actions. Judicious use of ICT provides significant transparency, with capability for timely and well-informed responses to combat and deter these perpetrators. In addition, the efforts made since 1993 have created a situation where we are now able to pay salaries that are regularly on target, both in terms of timeliness and amounts due. This is because the wage-bill's volatility against budget has been considerably reduced by having better forecasting and monitoring tools, while complex behind the scenes processes are being streamlined.

8. In e-Government terminology, this is an sample of G2G whereby ICT is used to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and continuity of processes that are internal to the public administration; or, in other words, to improve productivity. G2G makes the taxpayer happy, as it reduces the cost of government, but increases the quality, range and accessibility of services.

9. The general policy framework for e-Government in Tanzania is not only evident in our drive towards a performance-based and results-oriented public service. It is also articulated in the National ICT Policy adopted by Cabinet in March 2003, and reiterated more specifically in April 2004. The Policy document's Section 3.8 dwells on the significance and intentions for ICT in Tanzania's Public Service, while the Cabinet decision of 2004 set out key priorities towards implementing e-Government in the country. These priorities were to create a network infrastructure for the whole Public Service to be able to communicate within itself; to create an institutional framework for all e-Government resources; and to provide awareness to public servants and the general public about the value and benefits of e-Government for them.

10. We have since then focussed our efforts along those priorities, but the process of building acceptance of new concepts is always very challenging, especially where the availability of resources is limited. This is one of the reasons why we are pleased to see IST-Africa's initiative, as it provides us an outsider's neutral assessment and inputs to reinforce our perceptions.

11. Although the example of e-Government that I mentioned is of G2G, in reality that is the least visible aspect of all. As the mathematicians say, it is a "necessary but not sufficient" component of e-Government. Usually measurements are taken with respect to the impact of e-Government on the citizens and the business community of the country, respectively known as G2C and G2B. Also the reverse of these is used, namely C2G and B2G, to measure how e-Government helps the citizens and business communities to reach out to their government and contribute or obtain whatever they need.

12. It is not my intention at this stage to confuse you with all these acronyms, as I just want to reveal the matrix of processes and relationships surrounding the concept of e-Government. Too many people misrepresent e-Government as being a simple matter of computerisation in public offices, and see this as a luxury. As you will find out, that is far from being the case. Instead we are dealing with an area of investments with benchmarks, tangible returns, risk mitigation, and able to create competitiveness and sustainable benefits at both the micro and macro-economic levels. If one looks at computerisation and office-automation alone as representing e-Government, then it would be the same as judging the value of a vehicle by looking only at its tyres.

13. A recent study by the international consulting firm McKinsey suggests quantifying the impact of mobile phones on national economies by looking beyond the revenue of telephone companies. This amounts to a significantly higher percent of GDP, as in their words "*Much of this value appears to come from the productivity gains and economic surplus that mobile-phone users enjoy*". So they argue that the penetration and affordability of mobile phones are enablers for national economic growth. Well the same reasoning applies to e-Government if it is designed to respond to needs, and to improve the productivity and well-being of beneficiaries. This is true whether they obtain those benefits indirectly through intermediaries, like better-informed public servants or relatives, or directly from accessing a website at a nearby Internet-café, or conveniently by having a discrete exchange of SMS messages or emails using their mobile handsets wherever they might be.

14. To offer such a wide basket of conduits for accessing e-Government services in a secure and reliable manner, we must review existing laws and regulations in order to ensure that they are conducive to healthy growth in ICT use, and up to the international standards of the Internet's global village. The module on cyberlaw placed as the climax of your two-day workshop, indicates that before discussing legal matters, you need beforehand to have built a common understanding of that matrix of other issues that I have only briefly touched upon. It is the session that all others are leading up towards.

15. Cyber-law is very dynamic and exciting field in its own right. And your resource person is well experienced after having spent several years in the Legal Sector Reform Programme, which is a sister-programme to the Public Sector Reform Programme which I mentioned earlier. He is extremely busy these days, so I can assure you that it is a rare opportunity for you to be able to spend time listening to him and picking his brains on this topic. So I call upon participants to view that session as a unique opportunity to learn what you can do to help the government in adjusting its policies and laws towards nurturing the development of ICT empowered public services.

16. Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope our participants will fully exploit the opportunity of these two days by generously sharing experiences, learning diligently from one other, and interacting with their resource persons. All should come out of this workshop with a clear understanding of what it takes to create the policy and legal framework for implementing e-government strategies in Tanzania. I'm sure that this will keep you very busy.

17. As you are naturally eager to get started, let me end here. So, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with a sense of privilege that I now declare this Workshop open. I wish you fruitful deliberations and an enjoyable learning experience.

And my gratitude to all of you for your patient attention.