

Use of the Internet in public services

We are now in the age of e-opportunities, broadly defined as interactions and transactions facilitated through the Internet. Business organizations and private individuals are quick to take advantage of the benefits e-opportunities provide, like e-mail and e-commerce, for almost instantaneous communication and transactions. And the scope of e-opportunities is increasing exponentially. Many governments of developed economies are actively utilizing the Internet to facilitate and improve public services. Their experience has shown that Internet-based public services can contribute significantly to increasing productivity through time and cost savings and greater convenience for the public.

Governments of countries in Asia and the Pacific, on the other hand, are generally less aggressive or less “e-ready” than their counterparts in the developed countries in seizing the opportunities the Internet offers for improving public services. However, there is an increasing realization among them that the time has come to leapfrog the digital divide and use the Internet to serve their people better.

Recognizing this aspiration among its member countries to provide more Internet-based public services, the APO sponsored a symposium on “The Internet for Public Services” in Indonesia, 26–30 August 2002, to examine the key issues involved and to identify the most appropriate methodology and strategy to employ for achieving this objective. Eighteen participants from 12 APO member countries took part.

The symposium was inaugurated by Mr. Adang Farid Kantaprawira, APO Director for Indonesia and Director-General of Manpower Training and Domestic Placement, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Government of Indonesia. In addressing the participants, he pointed out that the application of e-opportunities by public service agencies will not only contribute significantly to productivity improvement in their respective organizations but also in

the nation and society as a whole. Through the Internet, he added, public organizations can provide services in a more comprehensive and efficient manner.

The symposium covered a wide range of topics, including: Quality public services through e-services; Opportunities for international collaboration in promoting e-services; Conditions and requirements for e-public services; The role of government and other stakeholders in promoting e-public services; The experience of the Republic of China in e-services; e-Services in Indonesia; Opportunities for international collaboration in the promotion of e-services; and Future application of the Internet for public services.



Participants at the symposium in group discussion

Mr. Mukesh Dev Bhattarai, IT Officer in the APO Secretariat, made a special presentation on the use of the Internet by the APO to improve and enhance its services to member countries. Participants were taken on a field visit to PT Indosat, the agency in Indonesia responsible for satellite communications. 🌀