



Digital Nations Ministerial Statement

3 November 2022, Seoul

We, the Digital Nations Ministers, are gathered, on 3 November 2022, under the chairmanship of Sang-min Lee, Minister of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea, to discuss the development of digital government under the theme of “Agile and Active Digital Governance” at the 9th Digital Nations Ministerial Summit in Seoul, Korea.

We have been working together to advance the ten principles of the Digital Nations Charter, with the shared mission of being at the forefront of digital government for the benefit of citizens. We have been fulfilling our duty to strengthen cooperation among Digital Nations and contribute to international society.

Unpredictable crises such as the pandemic and climate change have brought challenges to governments across the world. As digital technologies continue to rapidly develop, new opportunities are emerging to help resolve the increasingly large and complex range of social and

economic challenges faced across the world. We recognize that cooperation among citizens, enterprises, and government in the course of the digital transformation of the public sector will enable us to propose agile and active solutions for social problems and create new values.

We share a commitment to help governments be agile and collaborative in responding to the demand of citizens. We will do this through encouraging and adopting innovative processes, cultures, and ways of working within our government organisations.

We are proactive in providing customized public services through science-based policy-making. We utilise data and artificial intelligence (AI) to the best effect, while actively exploring measures to protect personal information and digital rights along the way.

To help further develop the digital governance of all member states, at this year's Ministerial meeting we have shared how each government is implementing the aforementioned commitment and the challenges and opportunities that were experienced in the process.

As agreed at the Steering Committee that took place in Lisbon, Portugal in July 2022, we established Digital Nations membership Terms of Reference that specify the criteria to join Digital Nations. We discussed how to operate the Digital Nations Secretariat to properly support the

Digital Nations group as well as the expansion of cooperation among members and agreed that the prior, incumbent, and the next chair country will make up the Secretariat.

The Digital Nations had three thematic working groups operating this year: Digital Identity, AI, and Sustainable Digital Government, and we welcome the outcomes of each group. We agreed to launch a new thematic working group named “Digital Governance”, commencing in January 2023. The Digital Nations expect that this working group will enable us to further develop effective digital government with a long-term perspective across the international community.

We remain committed to expanding and continuing our cooperation for the common development of the member states, to raising citizens’ trust, and contributing to the international community by providing agile and active digital services.

Digital Identity Working Group

Digital Identity is now recognized as a basic right of a citizen in a democratic country. The appearance of COVID-19 emphasized and accelerated the importance of remote online services to the citizens, based on secure digital identity. The concept of digital identity has now broadened into a variety of data-attributes and credentials that are used in different life-events while interacting with government, business and our

fellow citizens, in our own country, while traveling abroad or while interacting digitally with agencies and people outside our country. This brought with it the new concepts and paradigms such as distributed identity, e-wallets, verifiable credentials and mobile Driving License. The challenge we all face now is how to integrate the classic notion of centralized digital identity management with these new concepts and paradigms, and how to proceed as nations to implement a new model in a sustainable, open and inclusive approach.

We recognize in our thematic group the importance of collaborating in the evaluation of the different alternatives, sharing our experience and creating a realistic approach for how we can use this DN platform to tackle emerging and future challenges that will support the ongoing development of our respective national models.

In order to create and support digital identity models, we have to respect the complete identity of a citizen and meanwhile to protect his or her privacy.

Digital identity is in the end - digital dignity. Democracy relies on the ability to create and sustain a digital identity that will support the ability of all citizens to gain their rights and benefits in an efficient and accessible manner - with no one left behind. The Digital Identity TG is committed to

work to this end and to produce viable deliverables accordingly.

Artificial Intelligence Working Group

The Working Group on AI was established to support Digital Nations Members in the fulfilment of the "Shared Approach for the Responsible Use of AI by Governments" adopted in November 2018. The overarching objectives of the group are the following:

1. Understand and measure the impact of using AI by developing and sharing tools and approaches
2. Be transparent about when and in what context we are using AI, starting with a clear user need and public benefit
3. Provide meaningful explanations about AI decision-making, while also offering opportunities to review results and challenge these decisions
4. Be as open as we can by sharing code, training data, and other relevant information, all while protecting personal information, system integration, commercial integrity, and national security and defence
5. Provide sufficient training so that government employees developing and using AI solutions have the responsible design, function, and implementation skills needed to make AI-based public services better.

During the UK leadership of the group in 2021 and 2022, the group has been working towards developing empirical baselines that can help

members identify the most effective actions and opportunities they can adopt as governments and facilitating access to resources that support coordination and sharing of best practice in AI. Building on the achievements from 2020 and 2021, such as the collaborative paper: *Creating the Right Culture to Foster AI and Manage Change: Lessons from the Digital Nations* that shared case studies of an innovative and responsible use of AI in the public sector across the Digital Nations countries; and the Digital Nations podcast that spotlighted the work of member countries, in 2022, the group established its objectives:

- Reviewing and updating the DN AI principles to emphasize the importance of AI ethics and transparency;
- Sharing AI governance arrangements between the DN countries (including impact assessments, ethical frameworks, AI strategies etc in a form of country presentations with a view of developing a joint DN impact assessment for AI that countries could adapt domestically);
- Strengthening practical collaboration in AI between the DN countries (Sharing practical AI use cases in the public sector with a view of how they could be replicated in other countries).

In addition to the previous set of countries (Canada, Estonia, Israel,

Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, Uruguay, UK), the AI Working group welcomed Denmark as a new member.

Sustainable Digital Government Working Group

The record heat waves, floods and storms of 2022 demonstrate the urgency we face as governments to address the climate emergency. At the same time our use of technology increases year over year. We recognize the need to manage sustainability risks associated with digital tools and technology and we remain committed to understanding and harnessing the transformative potential of digitalization to improve the sustainability of government operations. We reaffirm the Digital Nations Shared Approach to Sustainable Digital Government and continue to be guided by the principles contained therein.

We welcome ongoing cooperation within the Sustainable Digital Government Working Group to share best practices, current work and future plans including the 2022 Survey on Sustainable Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Procurement. We look forward to continuing our efforts in 2023 by turning our focus towards measurement of the sustainability footprint of our digital operations and the data required to do this work as well as understanding what existing standards, tools, and methodologies could be harnessed to achieve our goals.

정호준

Republic of Korea

Pascal V

Canada

Mees Loo

Republic of Estonia

A. Tor

Israel

B. Guerrero

United States of Mexico

Paul Fox

New Zealand

Paulo Passalunghi

Portuguese Republic

Tim. Lee

The United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland

Paulo Pacheco

Oriental Republic of Uruguay