

Editorial

Municipal and Regional Governments Endorse Strong e-Participation Actions

The predominant attention to ICT driven e-Government programs has been primarily focused on at the national level, involving central authorities and their numerous high priority responsibilities, but not frequent direct contact with citizens, organizations and businesses. Municipalities and regions within countries, as provinces and states, on the other hand, have extensive interaction in providing basic services such as welfare, taxation, education, hospitals, elections etc, as well as interacting with business and other organizations for licensing, and many others regularly. The need to strengthen the role of municipalities and regions in e-Government is the theme of the In-Focus section of this I-Ways.

A major initiative to promote e-Government in the world's municipalities was launched at the E-Participation Forum, sponsored by the Global Cities Dialogue and hosted by the local authority of Guro in Seoul, South Korea. Mayors and other officials repre-

senting cities, international organizations, and NGOs, participated in the Forum. The program debated the concept of e-Democracy and demonstrating to citizen's ways of realizing the benefits of e-Participation. A second theme reviewed different practices being taken by local governments to develop best practices. How to strengthen regional development through e-Governance and ICT, such as establishing new networks, also were presented.

The Guro Declaration was endorsed by Forum participants as a means to promote the realization of e-Government through greater public participation of citizens. The Declaration recognizes "the importance of mayoral leadership and responsibility to establish a vision of e-Government, informatization policy and building infrastructure to strengthen the citizens' capacity to achieve information society goals."

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