

The Role of E-government in Promoting the Construction of an Honest Government in China

Ministry of Supervision of the People's Republic of China

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Chairpersons, ladies and gentlemen :

Please allow me to deliver a speech on behalf of the delegation of Ministry of Supervision of the People's Republic of China, the topic of my speech is "E-government's Role in Promoting the Construction of an Honest Government".

I. The Chinese government attaches much importance to promoting the role of an E-government

Chinese government has been attaching much importance to the construction of E-government, and the central and local governments have carried out the office automation since the middle of 1980s. After entering the 21st Century, the Chinese government sensibly grasped the chance for the development of global informationization, brought promotion of informationization building into the national development strategy and took the utilization of modern information technology as important means to manage state affairs and therefore enhance capacities of economic regulation, market supervision, social management and public services.

In Oct. 2000, China adopted the strategic policy of "industrialization driven by informationization " and "the government looks ahead and promotes informationization of national economy and the society" and the specific tasks.

In Aug. 2001, the State Informationization Leading Group was reestablished, the Premier of the State Council acted as group head and the State Council Informationization

Office was set up. In the first session of State Informationization Leading Group, it emphasized as follows: each department of the central government and the local government at each level shall pay more attention to the building of E-government; the heads shall concentrate on studying informationization knowledge, fully utilize information technology to strengthen effective administration of the government, promote the governmental function transformation, improve the working efficiency and administrative level of the government and push forward the publicity of governmental affairs and building an honest government.

In 2002, in the second session of State Informationization Leading Group, it reviewed and adopted the *Guideline on Building of E-government in China* and specified the objective, principle and major task for building of E-government in China during the period of the “10th Five-year Plan”, which pointed out the development direction and determined strategic priority for speeding up the promotion of E-government.

In 2005, in the fifth session of state Informationization Leading Group, the *2006—2020 State Informationization Development Strategy* was adopted and it pointed out that “the E-government shall be carried out closely on the basis of improvement of capacities of managing state affairs”, which indicated the major task for informationization development in the coming long period in China.

The main objective of the E-government in China during the period of the “11th Five-year National Social and Economic Plan” was put forward in the national E-government working symposium held on June 12, 2006: until 2010, the national uniform E-government network shall have been constructed on the whole and the information resources disclosing and sharing mechanism shall be preliminarily set up; the

governmental portal website shall become an important channel for publicity of governmental information and more than 50% of administrative license items can be handled via the government's official website; the E-government shall play a more important role in improving the public service and supervision capacity in addition to the reduction of the cost of administration etc.

II. Basis for building E-government in China

In recent years, under guidance of the Chinese government, the building of E-government in China has achieved a rapid development.

(1) Infrastructures of E-government have been developed rapidly. By the end of 2005, the netusers in China have reached 111 million persons, of which the broadband users are 64.3 million. The number of national websites were totally 694,200 and the total domain names were 2,592,410, of which the domain names for GOV.CN rose to 23,572 from 4,615 at the end of 2000, the websites for GOV.CN was added to 11,995 at the end of 2005 from 3,294 at the end of 2000, and the online persons of governmental departments accounted for 13.1% of the total persons who surf on the Internet.

By the end of 2005, among the departments in the central government, 13 departments has set up the specialized website platform, 7 departments did not set up the specialized website and the official websites of 6 departments were in construction and to be constructed. There are 10 provincial governmental organs setting up the online platform. The E-government provincial local network and city local network were set up respectively in Beijing, Shanghai, Heilongjiang, Jiangxi, Anhui, Guangdong and Fujian etc.; and the Internet construction feasibility reports of Hunan, Hubei and Yunnan etc. have been approved.

②) Constructions of government official websites have achieved outstanding performances. The Central People's Government official website of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as "Chinese Governmental Web", the website address: www.gov.cn) was formally established and put into operation on Jan. 1, 2006; the languages of the website includes simplified Chinese version, traditional Chinese and English. There were 40.48 million clicks and 340,000 times accesses on its opening day. The Chinese Government Web was warmly welcome both at home and abroad. As critics believe, this is an innovation of administration mode for the Chinese government and an important measure for China to increase transparency of governmental affairs and build up a service-oriented government.

The coverage of governmental network is being expanded gradually. At the end of 2005, the government official websites above the county level reached by 73.5% in China, while those of ministries and commissions under the central government, provincial government, prefecture-level government and county-level government were 93.4%, 90.3%, 93.1% and 69.3% respectively. The E-government cross departments such as taxation, audit, social insurance, finance, customs, public security, bank and agriculture etc. were highly supported by the state and achieved a remarkable progress. For example, the "Golden Finance Project" of the Ministry of Finance is the governmental integrated finance management information system for core businesses such as budget management, concentrated income and expenditure of the state treasury and observation of financial economic prosperity etc. By the end of 2005, 165 central departments and about 10,000 grassroots units utilized such system to prepare and report the budget, and 36 provincial and 268 prefecture-level financial departments made use of the system.

③) A progress is witnessed in laws, regulations and standardization for

E-government. Under joint efforts of over 100 enterprises and institutions and more than 200 experts across the country, the National Standards Commission promulgated 6 national standards including the *Electronic File Format Based on XML* etc., and republished 24 national standards drafts such as the *E-government Standardization Guide* and *Contents System and Exchange System on Information Resources of Governmental Affairs* etc. for which the opinions are being solicited in the whole country. These standards provide basic technological supports for business coordination and information sharing among governmental affairs information systems and for security of network and information.

III. E-government played an active role in promoting the construction of an honest government

Chinese government has been paying more attention to improve the technological contents of administrative supervision and the level of administrative surveillance through the E-government so as to promote the building of a clean and honest government in all governmental departments.

(1) E-government becomes the important means for publicity of governmental affairs. In 2005, the General Office of State Council of China issued the *Opinions on Further Promotion of Publicity of Governmental Affairs*, it pointed out that “construction of governmental websites shall be strengthened to push forward the E-government; and the online services scope including examination and approval, inquiry, payment, certificate handling, consulting, complaint and resort shall be expanded step by step so as to provide the people with quick and convenient services.” Some provincial governments have issued regulations and provisions on publicity of governmental affairs, the legislation procedures for *Provisions on Publicity of Governmental Affairs* at the state

level has started and relevant prophase research and drafting have been completed. The governments at each level have put the Internet as important carrier to publicize government affairs, and many conditions are published on the Internet, for example, the annual working objective and performance of the government and relevant departments, financial budget and performance, allocation, utilization and management of special funds appropriated by the superior government, invitation of public bidding and bidding submission for engineering projects and building of social public benefit cause, selection and appointment of cadres and employment of public servants etc.; and another major content on these website are the duties of the governmental departments, handling basis, procedures, process, results, service commitments and complaints and investigation against such commitments. The publicity of governmental affairs on the websites at each level improved transparency of governmental work, made the people more familiar with basic procedures of governmental work and relevant laws and regulations, timely learnt about the process of handling affairs and the results and have more rights to learn the truth and participate for governmental administrative behavior, reduced the opportunity for governmental public servants to figure for personal gains through monopoly and unbalance of information

2) Reporting an offense via Internet becomes an important channel for the citizens to supervise the government. The relevant special supervision authority of Chinese government accepts and handles offense reports from the citizens through the website. It is a convenient channel for the masses to disclose problems and supervise the government. To some extent, it is a platform for promoting the transparency, high efficiency, honest government. The international website of the Ministry of Supervision of the People's Republic of China was formally put into operation on December 26, 2003; it

is the authority website issuing information on combating corruption and building a clean government and the important part of the central government portal website system; since it is put into operation, the access has reached about 8.50 million man times. In this year, the average daily access is about 15,000 times. In December, 2005, the “online offense report” formally started in service and a personnel is assigned to accept and handle the online offense report in time. The Shanghai People’s Procuratorate has initiated the “Shanghai procuratorial organization offense report website” in accepting and handling reports on criminal behaviors, through the post, such as corruption, bribe and malfeasance etc., and the crime-reporter may also arrange an interview with procurators and “track” the handling results via Internet.

③) Electronic supervision becomes the effective method to supervise the government’s power operation. Some Chinese governmental departments have set up the E-government system and realized the electronic supervision on administrative examination and approval and administrative license items, the real time monitoring on governmental power operation process through the information technology and can conduct prewarning and correction for violating behaviors, which reduced the black case work for power operation and the influence of human factors and promoted the building of a clean and honest government. For example, Shenzhen established the “Shenzhen electronic supervision system for administrative approval” in November, 2004 and carries out the electronic supervision on 31 governmental departments and 239 administrative license items throughout the whole city. The electronic supervision system designs the setting of 14 standardization factors for each administrative license item, in case of occurrences of nonconformance of these requirements in the examination and approval process, the system will find out, record and send warning immediately and automatically;

in case of occurrences of 12 cases such as rejection of application for affaires with qualified statutory conditions, conducting the examination and approval beyond the time limit and nonperformance of one-time notice etc., the “yellow card” warning will occur; in case of occurrences of 11 cases such as non-correction within the stipulated period and adding the examination and approval procedures or conditions without authorization etc., the “red card” warning will occur. Since the system is put into service, it has supervised 776,718 businesses, sent 574 prewarnings, 67 “yellow card” warnings and one “red card” warning; meanwhile, other many questionable conditions and nonstandard phenomena were found out and disposed and the system completed the supervision task the traditional manual mode can not achieve. In March, 2006, the “Shenzhen electronic supervision system for examination and approval of major investment projects” was put into service, and the monitoring objects for examination and approval involve with all major investment projects of 16 governmental departments.

In a word, E-government played an active role in pushing forward transformation of functions of the Chinese government, tightening up relations between the government and the masses and promoting the building of an honest government. With continual development of E-government, the Chinese E-government will create much space for building an honest government and play a more and more important role.

Thank you!