

Afterword

ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT: DEVELOPMENT IN A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

First of all, I am thankful for the opportunity of contributing to this title, an exceptionally interesting one, from the perspective of strategic planning and social and economic development. As I begin my third term as Governor of Sao Paulo, where circa 40 million people live, i.e., approximately 22% of Brazilian population, I realize that it is fundamental to know and consider the best practices presented by researchers and development projects managers, who have used the concept of electronic government, as well as technology and innovation, as development tools.

The State of Sao Paulo has passed through a long period of political stability which is translated into positive economic outcomes, such as: balanced public finances and the resulting recovery of the capacity to attract investments --including infrastructure works; the allocation of 70% of its resources into the social area --developing public policies toward education, healthcare, justice, social assistance, housing and people with disabilities; the establishment of partnerships with universities, municipalities and the private sector, enabling the access to state-of-the-art technologies and innovation, as a basis to the construction of significant qualitative and quantitative growth.

In this context, the concept of a Knowledge Economy (KE), which is mentioned several times in this title, is particularly interesting to the State of Sao Paulo, as it converts the intangible nature of knowledge into a resource with market value for society. The five KE pillars – (i) an economic and institutional policy that encourages the development, dissemination and use of knowledge; (ii) research capacity; (iii) population with a good level of education and qualified for the job market; (iv) dynamic infrastructure of information and communication; and, (v) social inclusion – are a useful palette to guide the coordination of State activities.

Economic development requires the joint action of State and municipal administrations, as well as of private enterprises, working together towards the shared improvement of quality of life, by using stimuli to the business environment, increasing job creation, improving family income and fostering social inclusion. The adoption of knowledge as a development factor, implies investing in education, technology and innovation, products and processes engineering, design, modern management methods, including knowledge management, and logistics. Public and private sectors investments in such fields generate favorable changes to the aggregation of value, to the production of agricultural goods, to industrial development and to the services sector. Such arrangement means improvement, efficiency and growth and it promotes balance and equality for the entire society.

By its characteristics, the economy of the State of Sao Paulo is propitious to the application of the five KE pillars. In this new development paradigm local variations, responsible for diversity, must be understood as prosperity generators; new sources of employment must be created, based on a model of technological innovation, in which the private sector engenders innovative solutions, to face foreign competition, and local governments find new receipts, besides modernizing options for providing its services. Furthermore, economic development necessarily entails overcoming iniquity, as well as urban and regional inequalities, including the realization of cities' potentials and their productive arrangements. Also on this field the proposals drawn up by the authors of this book provide useful lessons to confront the inequalities still persisting in our State.

I am convinced that the content of this book is of immediate and direct relevance for redirecting development policies toward global economies based on technological innovation. The authors and editors of this book must be congratulated for their capacity of sketching a new overview of governance, an electronic one, which is already being adopted by the State of Sao Paulo and that will become even stronger in the years to come.

Among the several programs implemented with a great success by the State Government in this area, two of them deserve a special attention: the *Acessa São Paulo* and *Poupatempo*. They can serve not only as models but also as objects of these development policies. The former is a digital inclusion program which provides workstations with free public access to the Internet as well as enables local citizens to access a broad range of public services available on the web. The latter provides and encourages access by providing equipped rooms where they can access and obtain more than two thousand kinds of public services at federal, state, and municipal levels available on the Internet. Although its users can count on the assistance of specialized personnel, one of the main objectives of those rooms is to encourage citizens' autonomy as s/he accesses and obtains electronic public services.

A very significant step, within the Knowledge Society, will be taken by the establishment of the Center of Excellency in Technology and Innovation for the Benefit of the Person with Disability (CETI-D, in its Portuguese acronym), whose implementation is being started by the State Government. One of its main objectives will be to identify technological and organizational solutions, aiming at the rehabilitation and social inclusion of persons with disabilities, so that those solutions could be applied to the greatest number of people, for the littlest cost. The first Center of this kind in Brazil and in South America, CETI-D will be the leading actor in the process of incursion of our continent in the international context of those countries which take active participation in the benefits of a globalized economy based on the resources of knowledge, innovation and technological progress.

I believe in the technology that overcomes differences, tears down the barrier of prejudice and brings citizens closer to each other. And I also believe that the CETI-D will be a noteworthy tool for all of that.

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