

**Interview with Prof. Calestous  
Juma about future of**

# **e-Government, Innovation and Technology**

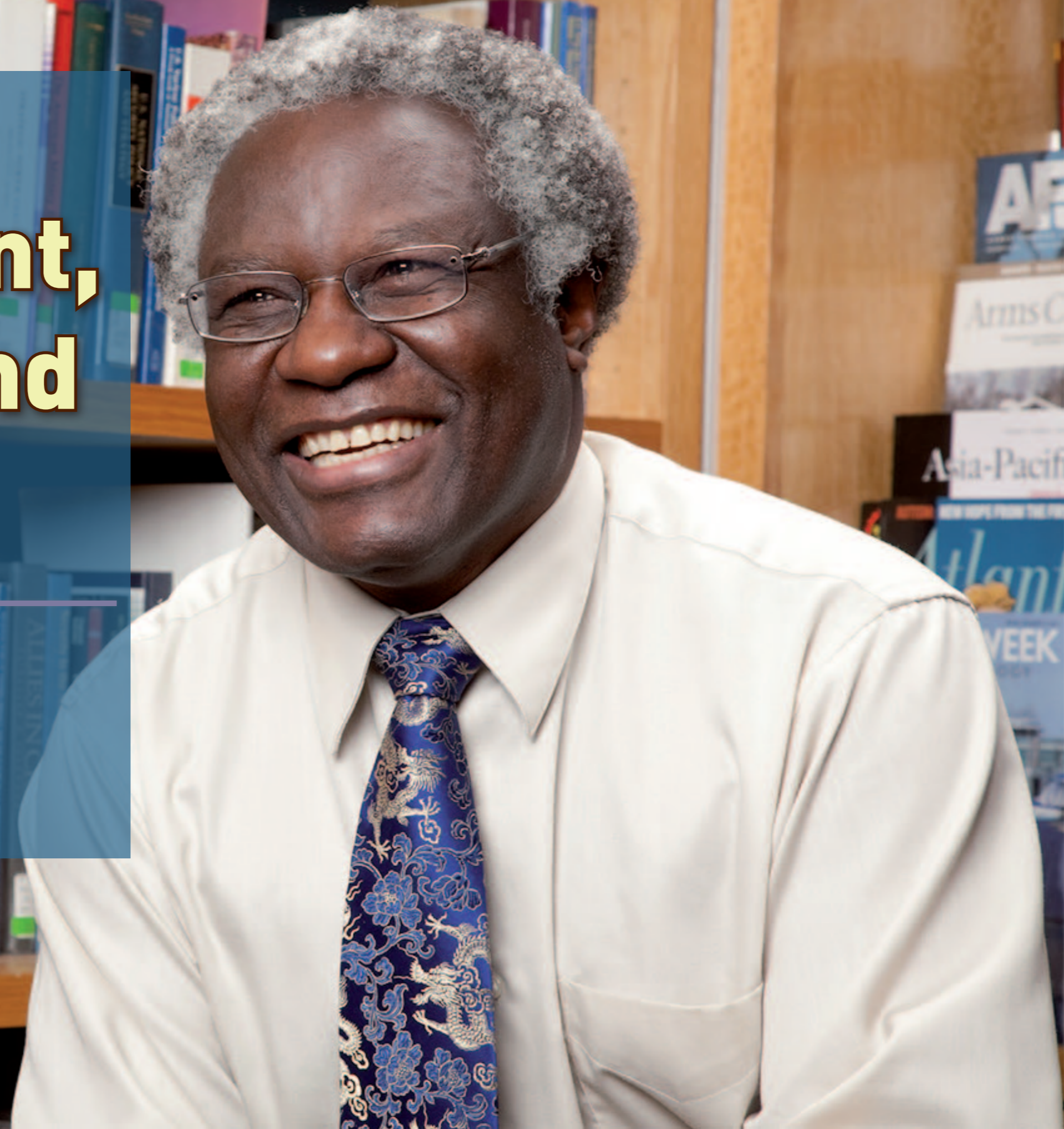


**by R. Erdem ERKUL**

Editor & Founder

[www.digital-government.net](http://www.digital-government.net)

[eerkul@digital-government.net](mailto:eerkul@digital-government.net)







• **What is the relationship between Innovation and Economic Development?**

It is nearly 100 years since the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter published his classic book, *The Theory of Economic Development*, which laid out the foundation for our understanding of the way innovation drives economic development in a qualitative and systemic way. His view that this was done through new products, processes, methods of productions, markets and raw materials is as valid today and it was when wrote the book. Innovation therefore is broader than just new technologies and includes adjustments in institutions. More fundamentally, technological change needs to co-evolve with social institutions.

• **How can e-government studies be better connected to and grounded in the mainstream public administration research?**

E-government is a powerful way to introduce efficiency, transparency and accountability in public administration. There already a growing body of research in this area and given its significant it will in time acquire mainstream status. This will be driven to a large extent by the rate at which e-government becomes adopted and becomes ubiquitous.

• **How to better measure and evaluate e-government performance and results?**

Measuring and evaluating the impact of e-government is essential for decision-making. Many of the measurements available today tend to focus on inputs and outputs and as a result they overlook the systemic and long-term changes. These are much harder to measure because they are depending on variables such as human capability and creativity. It is therefore necessary to be clear about the nature of what is being measured and the methods being used to measure it.

• **What do you see in the future of digital government?**

Digital government will follow wider digital trends in society. Governing to a large extent involves processing of information, whether it is law enforcement, elections or provision of public services. For this reason all aspects of government will be affected by the digital revolution.

• **Social media and open innovation, is it a good marriage?**

Human beings are by nature creative and so social media are being used to expand the scope of innovation and make it open. Trends

like crowdsourcing as examples of how social media are fostering open innovation in ways that were not possible before. They are also bringing more ideas into use.

• **Should the social media tools be related to digital government? If yes, how?**

Some aspects the digital revolution such as greater public access to information will change the very nature of government by forcing it to be more accountable, decentralized and open. For this reason, social media will continue to shape the way governments conduct their affairs. It is important that governments themselves start to adapt to this reality just like they have already adapted to the mobile revolution.

• **What do you think about Privacy & Security?**

Privacy and security will remain some of the most critical challenges of this century and new technologies become ubiquitous. Many countries are experimenting with a varieties of tools and laws to deal with privacy and security. The results of these experiments need to be shared globally so that new standards can be adapted. Without such advances in governance, there is a real danger that the benefits of information technology will start to face societal opposition. It is an example where institutional innovation needs to go hand in hand with technological change.

• **It seems that mankind will be facing major challenges on the sustainability of our environment. Do you expect major innovations on the Green ICT front in the next few years?**

Green innovation is probably going to be one of the most challenging areas in future given growing planetary pressures. Many of the technologies needed to make the sustainability

transition already. However, the main concern is that the social institutions needed to help the wider adoption of green technologies are lagging behind. There is a need to focus attention on institutional innovation, in both private and public sectors, to leverage existing technologies to foster the sustainability transition. In this regard, revolutions in green technology require complementary revolutions in institutional and social structures.



**Calestous Juma is Professor at Harvard** Kennedy School of Government and Faculty Chair of Innovation for Economic Development Executive Program at Harvard University. Follow @Calestous on Twitter  
 Web Page ; <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/about/faculty-staff-directory/calestous-juma>