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Second Committee

Agenda Item 16
ICTs for Sustainable Development

INDIA STATEMENT
By Mr. Anjani Kumar, Counsellor

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Mr. Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor. We welcome the report of the Secretary General on the agenda item 16. India aligns itself with the Statement made by the distinguished representative of Palestine on behalf of the G77.

Mr. Chair,

Information and communication technologies have transformed the way of conducting governance, communication and business by making a digitally connected world. A number of new technological advancements have become central to the information society, including high-speed broadband internet, artificial intelligence, cloud-computing and big data analysis. These innovations have facilitated rapid and transformational changes in economies and societies. Today, frontier technologies are being applied in various fields from manufacturing to services, innovative mobile phone applications; print & electronic media, transport, healthcare, agriculture, disaster risk reduction, education and academia, entertainment to social media.

We should work towards a "people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented" information society in order to bridge the digital divide and achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Chair,

The developments in the field of technology has also led to various challenges such as access, affordability, content, capabilities and the institutional, legal and regulatory framework. Today, more than 80% of the population has access to internet in developed countries, compared to less than 35% in developing countries. This inequality in access to internet needs to be addressed within the context of the SDGs.

Mr. Chair,

Indian government has used ICT to improve public services, citizen engagement, transparency and accountability. We have launched programs and initiatives with emphasis on technology such as Digital India, Make in India & Startup India.

The Digital India campaign aims to provide to each citizen digital infrastructure, e-governance and digital empowerment. The National Digital Communications Policy-2018 aims at ensuring availability of Broadband for all. Today, India has the second largest internet subscribers in the world. It is estimated that the adoption of key technologies across sectors spurred by the initiatives under Digital India could help boost India's GDP by an additional US$ 550 billion to US$ 1 trillion by 2025.

India's e-commerce market grew to $35 billion, growing at 17% in 2018. As much as 2/3 of that growth came from rural India. This growth has been triggered by increasing internet and smartphone penetration. By 2025, India could create a digital economy of $800 billion to $1 trillion.

Mr. Chair,

India has taken massive stride towards financial inclusion by the use of ICT. The number of bank accounts has doubled in last 7 years with now more than 80% adult Indians have bank accounts. India's successful adoption of unique biometric identities, popularly known as Aadhaar, has catalyzed inclusion and innovation in the delivery of financial services. Around 1.3 billion Indian citizens have already been issued their

unique identity cards. Some of the flagship schemes, like 'cash benefit transfer' clubbed with Aadhar, has enabled opening up of over 370 million additional bank accounts for the poor contributing to efficient and transparent delivery of services.

ICT tools are also being effectively deployed for improving the access and quality of education and healthcare services, including through tele-education and tele-medicine. A significant success in healthcare has been achieved with the use of a special application known as e-VIN, for real-time access to information about the availability of specialized vaccines around the country.

Geographical Information Management systems are being deployed to provide information about water, crop inventory, and other natural resource availability, early warning for natural disasters etc.

Mr. Chair,

In order to achieve SDG, India has launched an online dashboard called 'SDG India Index' which is an e-governance tool for monitoring the progress of the states in their journey towards achieving SDGs.

Mr. Chair,

The High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation established by the Secretary General submitted its report in June, 2019. India will actively work to implement the recommendations of the panel.

Mr. Chair,

India continues to work with fellow developing countries in facilitating capacity building in the use of ICT for development purposes. I would like to conclude by reiterating India's support to strengthen global partnerships in utilizing the transformative impact of ICT tools in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs that we have set for ourselves.

Thank You.