

Agenda Item 2

Theme topic: “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”

**Country Statement by H.E. M r. HUR Sungwook
President, National IT Industry Promotion Agency (NIPA)**

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Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Congratulations on the 80th ESCAP Commission Session. We extend our gratitude for all the efforts and contributions of Her Excellency Madam Armida Alisjahbana, and the ESCAP Secretariat for organizing this meaningful event.

As emphasized in this session's theme report, 'Rapid Digitalization and its Implications for Innovation in the Asia-Pacific Region,' IT has the potential to swiftly advance the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and generate positive impacts. Meanwhile, addressing the digital divide among nations, regions, genders, and socially disadvantaged groups is an urgent priority that demands immediate attention and solution.

Regional cooperation strengthens the connection between digital innovation and sustainable development and facilitates the spread of digital innovation across the Asia-Pacific region.

As a dedicated member state of ESCAP, the Republic of Korea has actively contributed to efforts to narrow the digital divide, enhance digital infrastructure, and foster intra-regional cooperation for digital capacity building within the Asia-Pacific region.

Korea has been actively involved in the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) initiative since its inception in 2012, steadfastly supporting the enhancement of ICT connectivity and capacity building across the Asia-Pacific region.

In the era of global digital transformation, Korea established the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) in Songdo in 2006. It has consistently provided material and human resources to enhance the ICT capabilities of public officials, policymakers, and cross-government agencies in developing countries.

In addition, in October 2022, the Ministry of Science and ICT of Korea, in collaboration with ESCAP, held the Asia-Pacific Digital Ministerial Conference under the theme 'Shaping our common future' to discuss and enhance cooperation in digital transformation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Furthermore, Korea will be hosting the 'AI Seoul Summit' with UK from May 21 to 22 to deepen our commitment to AI safety whilst also extending its scope to cover other aspects of the global AI governance framework. The AI Seoul Summit's primary goal would be for key global leaders to converge on the following three critical priorities on AI Safety, Innovation and Inclusivity. Your attention and support will be highly appreciated.

Lastly, as the first host country, the Republic of Korea welcomes the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation, scheduled for September 2024 in Kazakhstan. Additionally, Korea remains committed to collaborating with ESCAP to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to the mutual prosperity and sustainable development of the region.

Thank you.