

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR
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80th SESSION

**Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable
development in Asia and the Pacific**

**Statement by Director of the Economic and Technological
Development Bureau
Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region**

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*Honourable Chairperson,
Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, Madame Armida Salsiah
Alisjahbana,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It gives me great honour to address the 80th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on behalf of Macao, China. Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to our gracious host, the Government of Thailand, for their warm hospitality. I also wish to acknowledge UNESCAP's tireless efforts under Madame Alisjahbana's leadership in advancing sustainable development across our dynamic region.

Macao, China is striving to build a more sustainable and resilient economy by promoting economic diversification. In this connection, we have formulated the “1+4” strategy, which aims to enrich our role as “One Centre” for integrated tourism and leisure while facilitating the development of four nascent sectors, namely “Big Health”; modern financial services; high and new technology; and convention and exhibition, commercial and trade.

The “1+4” strategy stresses the role of technology and innovation as an important driver of economic diversification. In this context, apart from promoting the development of the technology and innovation sector, we are also committed to advancing digital transformation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with a view to enhancing their competitiveness and operational efficiency.

Electronic payment (e-payment) is one of the main components of digital economy. In Macao, China, the number and value of e-payment transactions increased by 17-fold and 22-fold respectively from 2019 to 2023. To assist SMEs to better adapt to the rise of e-payment, we launched a system called Simple Pay in 2021 to enable businesses to receive payments made via various e-payment platforms with one single device. This helps to simplify the reconciliation with banks and e-payment institutions as well as cash management for businesses.

Based on a survey on the use of technology by SMEs conducted in 2022, we have provided various types of measures and initiatives to assist SMEs in adopting technology for enhancing productivity. Some of them aim to enhance the digital awareness of SMEs, such as seminars featuring experts sharing experiences and insights on SME digitalization, as well as workshops on technology application.

There are also initiatives developed to suit the different needs of various sectors. Through the joint effort between the public and private sectors, a scheme has been launched to provide financial support to small and medium restaurants to adopt digital systems for improving operational efficiency. To date, the scheme has supported more than 500 local restaurants in their digitalization efforts, which include but are not limited to installing electronic ordering systems, as well as reengineering notification and payment processes.

Another scheme was launched in July 2023 to target retail, wholesale, lifestyle services, catering, and manufacturing sectors. Participants of the scheme will be offered training courses on digital transformation, business model diagnosis, and various digital solutions to help them

identify suitable digital tools or solutions to develop remote sales channels, reduce operating costs and improve management and operational efficiencies.

Looking ahead, Macao, China will continue to facilitate SMEs to actively innovate operations by integrating technological elements and accelerate digital transformation, thereby assisting them to enhance competitiveness and keep pace with time.

Distinguished delegates, as we gather here today to exchange ideas and experiences, let us forge stronger partnerships and collaborations in leveraging digital innovation to build a prosperous and sustainable future for all. Together, we can embrace the digital economy, enhance business efficiency, and ensure inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

Thank you.