

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MRS. BATTSETSEG BATMUNKH, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN
RELATIONS OF MONGOLIA, AT THE EIGHTIETH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**
(Bangkok, 22 April 2024)

Mr. Chairman,
Madam Executive Secretary,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the delegation of Mongolia, I extend our sincere appreciation to the ESCAP Secretariat for organizing the 80th session of the Commission, focusing on the theme of "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific".

According to reports from the Secretariat, Asia and the Pacific has achieved considerable but uneven socio-economic progress over the past decade. Mongolia supports ESCAP's vision of shared prosperity and commends the ongoing work to leverage regional integration for sustainable and inclusive development.

Excellencies,

World leaders from 193 nations unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. The transformative potential of innovation in reshaping global development trends is recognized within the SDGs. While SDG 9 focuses on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, all SDGs acknowledge the importance of actionable strategies to leverage innovative practices in science, technology, and entrepreneurship.

The advancement of science, technology, and innovation plays a critical role in accelerating the implementation of the SDGs, serving as a global development roadmap, ensuring equality among countries and nations, and expediting the socio-economic development of developing countries.

In addition, for landlocked developing countries, science, technology, and innovation - particularly in information and communication and its utilization - play essential roles in unlocking new opportunities in global markets and overcoming geographic disadvantages.

Distinguished delegates,

Harnessing digital innovations can significantly accelerate progress towards sustainable development goals, reduce inequality, and promote inclusive growth,

environmental stewardship, and social equity. However, it is essential to address challenges such as the digital divide, cybersecurity, data privacy, and regulatory frameworks to ensure that digital transformation benefits all segments of society and minimizes risks.

Bridging these divides, accelerating digital transformation in our region through regional cooperation, and ensuring that technological advances can benefit everyone will be a key challenge as our region seeks to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic recovery.

During the 78th session of the ESCAP Commission in May 2022, resolution 78/1, titled "Bangkok declaration on a common agenda to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific," was adopted. Members and associate members pledged to enhance digital cooperation and recognized the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (APIS) as a valuable regional platform.

Mongolia actively participates in the development and implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway action plan, which is centered on regional cooperation toward connectivity for all, data and digital technology, and applications. It is an important instrument to support the achievements of SDGs, bridging the digital divide, and accelerating digital transformation through the promotion of digital connectivity, digital technology, and data use in the Asia-Pacific region.

Digital connectivity and transformation are strengthening national competitiveness, boosting the productivity of businesses and manufacturing, and providing people with new values and services while advancing the fourth industrial revolution and opening up new opportunities for sustainable development. However, advancing digital connectivity and transformation requires multistakeholder regional cooperation among governments, private sectors, and other stakeholders, particularly for countries facing resource constraints, such as Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in our region.

Distinguished delegates,

Mongolia is facing new threats, challenges, and dynamics, prompting the government to implement a number of policy responses, including the "Vision-2050" long-term development policy. This strategy aims to establish a national science and innovation framework capable of competing internationally and sets forth a plan to enhance science, technology, and innovation over the next decade.

With this intention, my country has intensified the digital transition by enacting a set of digital transformation laws, streamlining government services, and successfully introducing a nationwide "E-Mongolia" platform. The initiative enhances services for both citizens and businesses, reduces corruption and bureaucracy, and strengthens

information security. Over a year ago, we established the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications to further this goal.

We believe the "Global Digital Compact," proposed in the UN Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda" report, will provide an important impetus for creating an open, transparent, and secure digital environment for all. Hence, I believe that the Commission will make a significant contribution to the advancement of developing countries and enhance the role of science, technology, and innovation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Excellencies,

I am confident that the current session will serve as a collaborative platform for exchanging experiences, best practices, and lessons learned as we strive to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I extend my sincere wish for a highly successful 80th session of the Commission.

In conclusion, may I draw the kind attention of fellow member States and international organizations to the World Women's Forum to be hosted by Mongolia on 22-23 August 2024 in collaboration with the United Nations. We encourage all your active support and participation in this initiative.

Thank you for your attention.