

COUNTRY STATEMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TURKIYE
80TH SESSION OF ESCAP

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Due to last minute engagement of my Ambassador, I will be making the Türkiye's country statement on her behalf as the Deputy Permanent Representative,

In this rapidly evolving technological era, we stand at the nexus of digital innovation and sustainable development. The intersection of these realms presents us with unprecedented opportunities and also challenges that require urgent and collective action.

Digital tools and technologies hold the key to accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We must leverage these tools to navigate the complexities of the SDGs and facilitate inclusive decision-making processes. Embracing digital governance enhances transparency, efficiency, and citizen engagement, paving the way for more responsive and inclusive governance structures.

Digital platforms also serve as bridges between policymakers and the public, fostering participatory and informed societies.

Türkiye actively employs digital technologies in providing government services to its citizens. Over 96 percent of the Turkish population over the age of 15 are active users of the "e-government" platform where they can easily and safely access over 8000 government services online, from acquiring a digital copy of their university transcripts to getting an appointment for vaccination during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Excellencies,

As we embrace digital transformation, we must also ensure international cooperation to promote innovation, economic growth, and equitable access to its benefits.

Türkiye acknowledges the importance of digital transformation in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and reaffirms its commitment

to promoting international development discussions. We stand ready to contribute further to a future that fosters innovation and empowerment for all.

In particular, we aim to be at the forefront of global initiatives in managing the exponentially growing Artificial intelligence sector, advancements in which can open new horizons for human development while carrying the risk of increasing inequalities and raising new concerns for both individual freedoms and national security. We will continue to contribute to international efforts in regulating AI.

Distinguished delegates,

As one of the co-chairs of the Group of Friends of the Least Developed Countries at the UN, Türkiye is the host and the biggest donor of the UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries.

Since its establishment in 2018, the Bank has been instrumental in strengthening the science, technology, and innovation capacity of LDCs, empowering them to build sustainable productive capacities. By facilitating access to cutting-edge technologies and fostering knowledge exchange, the bank has enabled LDCs to overcome barriers to sustainable development and unlock their full potential.

We encourage all ESCAP members to support and collaborate with the Bank to this end. Together, we can harness the power of technology to build a brighter and more sustainable future for all.

Distinguished Participants,

Digital innovation offers immense opportunities to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development. By harnessing advanced technologies, we can monitor, analyze, and mitigate environmental impacts while empowering individuals and communities to engage actively in environment conservation efforts.

However, to realize the full potential of digital innovation, we must bridge the digital divide and ensure inclusivity at all levels. This requires addressing territorial inequalities, gender gaps, and other digital divides to ensure equal access to opportunities for all.

Moreover, we must integrate principles of green transition, renewable energy, and eco-friendly practices into our digital solutions to promote sustainability.

As we strive to achieve the SDGs, it is also crucial that we prioritize human-centered approaches to digital innovation. Digital literacy, connectivity, and digital skills development are essential to ensure that no one is left behind in the digital age.

We also recognize that digital transformation requires significant investments in infrastructure, connectivity, and digital literacy efforts. It is essential that we develop innovative financing solutions and collaborate to ensure equitable deployment of digital innovation.

Effective leadership and governance are paramount to driving inclusive digital innovation. We must adopt strategies and policies that promote the greatest positive impact for individuals and societies, while addressing the risks and challenges associated with digital transformation.

In conclusion, we are at a pivotal moment for digital innovation. With vision, leadership, and global cooperation, we can harness the power of digital technologies to build a fair, inclusive, and sustainable future for all. Let us work together towards this common goal, guided by the SDGs, and leave no one behind. In this vein, we welcome the theme resolution of this year's commission session, sponsored by Mongolia and co-sponsored by Kazakhstan, and finalized with the active participation of ESCAP members.

On a final note, considering the damages suffered by cities in the Asia-Pacific region from natural disasters and especially the devastating effects of the earthquakes that occurred in Türkiye in February 2023, we find the theme of the 81st Commission Meeting, determined by ESCAP members as 'Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific' quite timely and appropriate.

Thank you.