**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
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Geneva, 14-18 May 2018

Priority theme 2 on Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies with a special focus on gender and youth dimensions.

Statement submitted by

Bulgaria

Tuesday, 15 May 2018

DELEGATION OF BULGARIA

STATEMENT

on Item 3, Priority theme 2: "Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies with a special focus on gender and youth dimensions"

Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Twenty-first session (14-18 May 2018)

- Dear Chairs, Dear Panelists, Dear Ministers, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, We appreciate the excellent work of all panels so far and their dedication toward harnessing technology for the benefit of the humankind. We have heard useful contributions and we hope to be part of such fruitful discussions in the future. The Republic of Bulgaria is aware of the challenges and opportunities that the rapid technological developments present. Therefore, Bulgaria has incorporated ICT-related policy guidance in several national strategies like health strategy, public administration development strategy and strategy for effective implementation of information and communication technologies in education and science.

- We are honoured to see a Bulgarian case study included in the Report of the SG "Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies, with a special focus on gender and youth dimensions". The report contains an excerpt from the Digital Bulgaria 2020 Programme. However, we are glad to announce that we are looking even further in the future. The Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communication has recently published the Digital Bulgaria 2025 programme and it underwent public consultation.

- The new programme contains 6 priorities: 1. Creating appropriate conditions for development of digital networks and services and better access to them; 2. Development of dynamic and innovative digital economy and increasing its growth potential; 3. Increasing the digital competencies and skills; 4. Ensuring effective and high-quality public electronic services for the business, citizens and governance; 5. Encouraging secure cyber ecosystem; handling the challenges for cybersecurity; 6. Internet governance.

- Sustainable and resilient societies are unthinkable without the inclusion of science and technology in education. School curriculum without enough focus on STI would be irrelevant and would fail to provide adequate knowledge to the young generation. Bulgaria is well aware of that. The Digital Bulgaria 2025 Programme envisages the introduction of a new subject in primary school: Computer modeling, which will be part of an educational profile Software and hardware sciences.

- While Bulgaria has a long way to go in empowering women for the use of technology, 34% of ICT students in Bulgaria in 2015 were women, compared to only 17% in the EU. In the same year, 1 ICT specialist out of 4 was a woman in Bulgaria, compared to 16% of all ICT specialists employed in the EU. These figures are no grounds for

complacency. On the contrary, they encourage us to seek improvement for women and girls.

- Nations do need own strategies to harness technology. But we certainly need also joint efforts to boost this process and share experience on how to prioritize science and technology. Science and technology know no borders and will grow ever more important in the future. We will reap the fruits of technological development only if we scale up our efforts, work together and make innovations accessible to everyone. Thank you!