

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
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**Item 2: Panel discussion on Progress made in the implementation of and
follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes
at the regional and international levels”**

Statement submitted by

India

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Permanent Mission of India
Geneva

Statement by India

at 20th session of United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) on ' Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at the regional and international level

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you and other Bureau members. I assure you of Indian delegation's full support and active participation in the deliberations of this Commission. I also want to thank all panelists for their comprehensive presentations.

We thank the UN Secretary-General for his report on the Agenda Item 2, dealing with review of the Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at the regional and international levels. The report talks about key trends such as Substantial albeit uneven growth in information and communications technology access and use, role of ICTs as an important catalysts for achieving SDGs, the ever growing importance of e business and e-commerce.

Mr. Chair

We agree with the assertion of the UNSG's Report that ICTs are becoming ever more central to the development of economies and societies, and will play a cross-cutting role in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda. In fact, ICTs have become an essential distribution platform for providing public and private services to millions of people around the globe. In addition the Internet of things and big data analytics, will have profound impacts on businesses, public services and the ways we live.

The concerns expressed by the UNSG regarding digital divide are very valid and need our immediate attention. There is no denying the fact ICTs are easily available, of better quality and more widely used in developed countries than in developing countries, and there is a risk that LDCs, in particular, may be left behind on the path to the information society. This will be against the core spirit of 2030 Development Agenda which has given the clarion call that No one should be left behind.

Market information, agricultural knowhow, financial services, education and health services, which were hitherto unavailable in the past, in remote inaccessible areas are now being accessed. By connecting people and places in real time, ICTs can play a vital role in regional, national and global development.

It is difficult to envisage any aspect of human development today which cannot be E-enabled. With these numerous opportunities come even greater challenges such as inequality arising

from digital divide, as well as threats to personal security, data privacy, environmental costs and cyber-terrorism. This Commission should hold intense discussion on these challenges.

Mr. Chair

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi, Government of India has launched a flagship Digital India Programme to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy by using ICTs. It is an Umbrella Programme that weaves together a large number of ideas and thoughts into a single, comprehensive vision. The Digital India programme is centered on three core components - One, Digital Infrastructure as a Core Utility to Every Citizen; Two, Governance and Services on Demand, and Three, Digital Empowerment. India is working on a state of the art - digital infrastructure, with the focus on high-speed internet as a core utility to facilitate online delivery of various services.

India has also taken a series of ground breaking initiatives to deal with Digital Divide. One of the the most extensive digital identity Programmes in the world has been launched in India called Aadhar. 'Aadhaar' is a 12 digit biometric and demographic based identity that is unique, lifelong, online and authenticable. In addition Government of India has launched Common Services Centres Scheme which provides ICT-enabled front end service delivery outlets across India. There is an extensive National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) initiative especially in rural areas to impart IT training to all who are not yet digitally literate. A special programme called Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) was launched recently for providing digital literacy covering 60 Million persons. **This is one of the biggest such initiatives in the world.**

Mr. chair :

India is committed towards the creation of an enabling environment so that adoption and implementation of digital technologies is encouraged. India launched a unique online initiative few years back called **MyGov platform**. The idea of MyGov is to bring the government closer to citizens by the use of online platform creating an interface for the exchange of ideas and views involving citizens and experts, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the socio-economic growth of India.

In order to **promote financial mechanisms through ICT, Government of India has developed** e-Marketplace called GeM to facilitate on line procurement of common-use Goods & Services required by various public institutions. GeM will enhance transparency, efficiency, and speed in public procurement.

India has also embarked on a National Digital Payments Mission in order to massively promote digital transactions. Digital payments will enable small and medium enterprises to access formal credit based on their digital transactions, and enable a large number of finance-tech companies offering various payment services. These measures will bring about innovations in payment solutions based on the detachment of banking from digital payments.

India has taken a supportive stance for multistakeholderism in Internet Governance. However, India maintains that governments have a primary role in cybersecurity because of their duty to protect their citizens and national security interests.

Mr. Chair,

These developments in India are broadly in consonance with the outcomes envisaged by WSIS at national level. To promote open data, India has also adopted the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy with a mandate to provide data from government departments in the public domain.

We look forward to the development of a common platform under the aegis of United Nations, which can enable sharing of experiences and best practices across countries in the areas of various ICT applications referred to in UNSG's report relating to financial inclusion, agriculture, health, governance and education for making the information available to the world.

Mr. Chair

India as a member of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation is actively contributing in the deliberations of the WGEC. India supports continued dialogue on the contentious issues and is ready to work towards building consensus on the implementation of enhanced cooperation.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to emphasize that a free and secure internet is a sine qua non for delivering programmes for development. We therefore fully support creation of a democratic internet governance structure that will ensure a balance between public policy interests on one hand and private commercial interests to realize the SDGs in a timely manner. We are confident that Commission's expertise will help identify the synergies between WSIS, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

With these words I thank you Mr. Chairman.