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Statement by

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

Developing countries face both unique opportunities and challenges in digital trade. We know that digital trade enables developing countries and MSMEs to be integrated to the global value chains, which results in unleashing their full potential. At the same time, it is also true that developing countries face a wide range of challenges, particularly the lack of adequate ICT infrastructure.

With regard to this issue, a wide range of policy areas could be discussed in UNCTAD. In our view, the following areas are worth discussing;

- promoting a fair competition environment and encourage new entrants in the telecommunications market;
- promoting ICT infrastructure in rural areas using public-private partnerships; and,
- reducing the cost of information and communications equipments necessary to build ICT infrastructure and the cost of personal devices.

We have submitted the contribution paper, and in that paper, we have suggested more concrete measures on these policy areas. We look forward for them to be discussed in UNCTAD in the near future.

Before closing my intervention, Japan would like to emphasise the importance of sharing information or best practices among

Member States, and UNCTAD's cooperation with other relevant international organisations. We believe that this IGE, together with eTrade for all, can play a central role for these purposes. We hope that such efforts will help Member States maximise the benefits of the digital economy which would lead to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.