



GROUP OF 77 & CHINA

G E N E V A

**Statement by Iraq on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group
Trade and Development Board
Sixty-Eighth Executive Session**

*Delivered by First Secretary Mahmoud Alatiyyah
Item 5 – Capturing value in the digital economy*

30 September 2019

Mr. President, H.E. Ambassador Michael Gafey (Ireland),
Madam Shamika Sirimanne, Director of Technology and Logistics Department
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group. The Group would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 & China. And since this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to welcome the newly formed Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Group and congratulate its members. The Asia-Pacific Group looks forward to a fruitful cooperation with that group and others.

Mr. President

The Asia-Pacific Group thanks the Secretary General for his remarks, Director Shamika Sirimanne for the presentation of the 2019 Digital Economy Report, and commend the UNCTAD Secretariat for the work conducted to draft the report entitled: “Value Creating and Capture: Implications for Developing Countries”. We also thank the expert panellists for their insightful presentations.

The Digital revolution has changed our world in an unprecedented way in the last few decades. Science, Technology, Communications, Education, trade, agriculture, industrial production, just to name a few, have all been affected as a result of the increased ability to generate, capture and analyse data. Digitalization is transforming value chains in different ways, opening up new channels for value addition, and creating enormous wealth in a record time.

However, that wealth was not distributed in a fair way! The disparity between those who are well equipped to benefit from that revolution and those who are left behind is striking! While small number of individuals, companies and countries are hyper-digitalized, the vast majority are still grappling with the issues of connectivity and lack of infrastructure.

The digital gap is expected to widen due to the introduction of new technologies that could further disadvantage developing countries, lead to loss of jobs, and set up new roles for economic transformation. The increasing dominance of Giant digital platforms that constantly consolidate their

competitive positions, will increase inequality further. The need for a global action to address the issue of digital gap between developed and developing countries is more than ever.

Mr. President,

The first edition of the Digital Economy Report which was first launched by UNCTAD Secretary General in Asia-Pacific region, in Bangkok, has chosen a timely topic, achieving SDGs has become increasingly dependent on utilising economic value of data by the developing countries. The report endeavours to provide the policymakers of the developing countries with evidence based and policy orientated analysis to initiate policies that helps those countries to benefit from the digital revolution.

Data has become an important economic resource for creating and capturing value. Control over data is strategically important in order to transfer them into digital intelligence. Local and global platforms can benefit from each other through building commercial relations that result in a fairer distribution of gains from data and digital intelligence. This requires national and global conducive policy frameworks that are closely related to the SDGs, in addition to building the capacity of the developing countries to actively participate in digital economy. UNCTAD as a UN organ in-charge of trade and development and through synergies in its three pillars of consensus building, research and analysis, and technical cooperation can be of good use for that endeavour.

I thank you Mr. President.