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CSTD 2017-18 priority theme on 'Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies with special focus on gender and youth dimensions'

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Slide 1. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce the issues paper on the priority theme "**Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies with special focus on gender and youth dimensions"**.

Slide 2. The report was prepared in collaboration with Professor Xiaolan Fu, from the University of Oxford. It draws on the latest literature on the topic as well as inputs from member states of the Commission.

In particular, we would like to thank the contributions from the governments of Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Kenya, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

Slide 3 This issues paper **builds on** the **previous work** of the CSTD on **foresight for digital development**, the priority theme of the commission in 2016. At the time, the CSTD examined some of the **latest technological developments** that are likely **to disrupt and transform existing social, political, and economic norms**. Among them were **big data, the Internet of things, open online courses, 3D printing and digital automation**. The Commission **discussed the importance** of **harnessing the potential** of these technologies in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also looked at some of **the challenges and risks associated with these technologies.** The CSTD **highlighted the role of foresight** as a tool for policy planning that allows us to assess the **potential impact of these technologies on society.**

Their impact is already **felt across many areas of social and economic life, including employment opportunities**. Today, new technologies are being developed in an **environment** shaped by the **pervasiveness** of **digital technologies, most prominently mobile phones and the Internet**.

Slide 4 These new technologies, such as **artificial intelligence, robotics, or synthetic biology,** to **name just a few**, have the **potential to support the achievement** of the **2030 Agenda**, particularly in areas such as **health, education, agriculture, new enterprise development, gender equality and environmental sustainability.**

1. To harness their potential, it is of **paramount importance to foster the digital competencies** that allow individuals to **engage with**, and **benefit from**, these **technological advances**.
2. Technological changes are never neutral. Today's **technological innovations are strongly biased toward capital and skilled labor to the detriment of routine workers who are easily replaced by automation.** New technologies pose a **particular** challenge to **women**, given their **underrepresentation in STEM fields** and the **persistent gender gap in the use of digital technologies**, such as the Internet. Technological innovations **potentially offer new opportunities to the young** who are **generally more adaptive to new technologies**, provided they **acquire the cognitive skills that are in demand on the labour market.**

Given these opportunities and challenges, the crucial question for us today is **how to build the skills and competencies that are indispensable to allow individuals**, to **participate in, and benefit from this latest technological advances**.