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Contribution by India

to the CSTD 2023-2024 priority theme on “Data for Development”

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## **Government of India's Inputs for PRIORITY THEME 1: Data for Development**

1. What are the major contributions and risks of data in relation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Data holds unbridled potential for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Insights received from data are indispensable for effective policy making, efficient resource allocation, and successful public service delivery. Thus, the use of data allows decision makers to discover, understand, and communicate patterns and interrelationships facilitating agile, efficient and evidence-based decision-making. Data can further the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its achievement of its SDGs in two ways i.e. "Data on SDGs" and "Data for SDGs".

Data on SDGs refers to the use of data for measuring, monitoring, and evaluating progress on development and includes ways of using different data sources to complement official statistics and better meet their objectives for providing timely and accurate evidence for policy-making. A good example of use of data on SDGs could be the use of data of spending patterns of mobile phone services can be used as a proxy indicator of income levels for SDG 1- No Poverty. Data for SDGs refers to extracting intelligence of public value from data from different sources and using it to build partnerships and innovative solutions to further the SDGs. A good example would be the use of use of satellite data for humanitarian assistance.

Data-informed approaches to advancing progress on the SDGs can foster innovation through effective and responsible use of new and other emerging technologies including but not limited to Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (BDAI), Machine Learning (ML) while facilitating data providers, managers and users to work towards building dynamic, robust and inclusive engagements that can help advance multi-stakeholder engagement and cross-sectoral collaboration. It can also catalyse evidence-based policy making to address development challenges in the areas of, inter alia, eradication of poverty, social protection, healthcare services, quality education, food security and nutrition, agriculture, industry, environment, urban development, infrastructure, migration, disaster risk reduction, financial inclusion and help in accelerating progress on the SDGs through data insights that can result in efficient resource allocation, improving service delivery, monitoring progress, evaluating impacts, improving accountability and empowering individuals.

However, the increasing data divide within and amongst countries possesses a significant challenge that can affect the achievement of the SDGs. The digital divide is particularly wide for developing countries hindering their ability to utilize the benefits of high-quality data. Challenges arise from a lack of stable institutions, low digital maturity and literacy, and gaps in regulatory practices to protect individuals and

organizations. The inputs received from processing of non-inclusive datasets will also not represent the correct information and may exclude the most vulnerable from the benefits of programs and efforts designed for their benefits.

## 2. How can developing countries benefit from the data revolution while considering risks?

Effective collation and analysis of data sets on specific development issues can not only allow governments, international organisations, academics, businesses, private sector and civil society organizations to understand the severity and impact of a particular development issue, but also mobilize their leadership, agency, entrepreneurial and innovative skills to improve policy making and public interventions as well as create transformative solutions that are grounded in evidence to track and accelerate development, improve social protection, and provide insights on existing social and development policies and programmes that require adjustment.

For developing countries specifically, it is a challenging task to pursue the double objective of becoming digital governments themselves (i.e., to rethink and re-engineer government processes and public services to respond to users' needs and expectations) and to cultivate appropriate enabling environments (legal, policy, regulatory, and technical) for greater data usage across public and private sources, which can, in turn, underpin economic and social development. Challenges arise from a lack of stable institutions, low digital maturity and literacy, and gaps in regulatory practices to protect individuals and organizations. There are opportunities for developing countries to formulate and implement public sector data governance frameworks that align with international standards and best practices.

Developing countries can prioritize efforts towards creating and safeguarding data infrastructures that capture the equal representation of society and contribute to public value while respecting individual interests. Data can also be effective for creating new channels of interaction, improving transparency and collaboration with communities and the private sector by developing mechanisms such as open government data initiatives.

It is important for developing countries to promote inclusive use of data for development, including through the use of coherent and responsible data governance frameworks that guide the reuse and sharing of data, in both the public and private sectors along with appropriate safeguards keeping human safety, individual empowerment and well-being, privacy and dignity at their core. Further, it is important to commit to a gender-responsive perspective taking into consideration women from disadvantaged backgrounds into the conceptualisation and implementation of D4D to prevent discrimination and stereotyping that can lead to gender inequality.

3. What national and international policies and support measures can help address the challenges of the developing countries in the area of data relevant for sustainable development, including scientific and research purposes, data quality, data capabilities and data governance, while taking into account the multiple dimensions of data?

The G20 High-Level Principles on Harnessing Data for Development (D4D) to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs, adopted unanimously by the G20 Development Ministers, advocate for strengthening D4D ecosystems globally, particularly in developing countries to maximize their potential for the achievement of the SDGs while respecting their development and policy priorities. The seven principles can be summarized as under:

- Strengthening data-informed approaches to sustainable development by strengthening data-informed approaches to advancing progress on the SDGs that foster innovation through effective and responsible use of new and other emerging technologies and catalysing evidence-based policy making to address development challenges.
- Enhancing the availability of high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable, disaggregated, and intersectional data to ensure that no one is left behind. Further, promote safeguard measures such as privacy protection, personal data protection, intellectual property protection and security taking into account legitimate public policy objectives.
- Bridging the digital divides, including the gender digital divide and growing data divide between and within developed and particularly in developing countries by encouraging amongst others the development of skilled, competent and inclusive talent pools in developing countries,
- Supporting developing countries through capacity building programs to assist them to harness existing and new data sources to produce insights to bring about real development impact and pave the way for them to enhance their participation in the global digital economy.
- Foster predictable, targeted, and sustainable savings and investments for D4D initiatives, including by encouraging integrated national financing frameworks, inclusive innovative financing mechanisms such as blended finance, and strengthening international development cooperation partnerships including North-South, South-South and Triangular cooperation.
- Promote inclusive use of data for development, including through the use of coherent and responsible data governance frameworks that guide the reuse and sharing of data, in both the public and private sectors along with appropriate safeguards in line with national legislations keeping human safety, individual empowerment and well-being, privacy and dignity at their core.

- Encourage increased collaboration and multi-level multi-stakeholder partnerships, to promote the use of data for development.

Further, India has launched “Data for Development Capacity Building Initiative” for providing capacity building training for policy-makers, officials and other relevant stakeholders from developing countries to take forward the actions elaborated in the work of the Development Working Group on the G20 Principles on D4D. The detailed principles are attached separately with this note.

4. In your country’s view, what role could CSTD play in respect of data for development, including in the context of the Global Digital Compact?

The G20 members represent around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population and plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues. After long hours of deliberations, negotiations and contemplations, the G20 Development Working Group unanimously adopted the G20 High-Level Principles on Harnessing Data for Development (D4D) to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs where the G20 members advocate for strengthening D4D ecosystems globally, particularly in developing countries to maximize their potential for the achievement of the SDGs while respecting their development and policy priorities.

The D4D Principles can be the basis for discussion for the Global Digital Compact (GDC) as to how data can be used to further development issues across the globe. The principles can also be referred to in the CDC. The CSTD can also support the implementation of the D4D principles through advocacy and capacity building for D4D especially in the developing countries. It can also support timely and pertinent discussion on issues on D4D while providing high level advice to UNESCO and the UNGA.