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ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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

Statement submitted by

The Philippines

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PHILIPPINE INTERVENTION

CSTD 2023-2024 Intersessional Panel Meeting
6-7 November 2023 | Lisbon, Portugal

PRIORITY THEME 1: DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Thank you very much, Chair.

First of all, we would like to thank Portugal as the host country and the CSTD Secretariat for successfully organizing this Intersessional Panel Meeting in Lisbon.

Excellencies,

The world is seeing the rapidly increasing value of data. Data catalyzes development, especially in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Philippines, from its own experiences, recognizes how data can support effective planning, policymaking, and project implementation.

Data is a powerful tool to address pressing global issues such as in disasters, climate change, health, and environment. Please allow me to provide a few examples. The Philippines, through its Department of Science and Technology (DOST) has been maximizing the application of data in disaster risk reduction and management through a government-led, multi-agency initiative called "GeoRisk Philippines". GeoRisk Philippines is an integrated platform that serves as a central resource of information on natural hazards and risk assessment. One of its applications is called "HazardHunterPH" which can generate indicative hazard assessment reports on the user's specified location. It is helpful as a reference for property owners, buyers, land developers, planners, and other stakeholders needing immediate hazard information and assessment.

This also leads to the creation of the PlanSmart Ready to Rebuild web application, an automated planning tool that can systematically generate a rehabilitation and recovery plan using calculation tools and producing consolidated results into a pro-forma planning document template. Through PlanSmart, the size of the population that can be affected by a disaster could be determined through accurate information including hazard assessments and reports. It gathers pre-disaster baseline data and post-disaster impact

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assessment. Using data in DRR is undoubtedly critical for the Philippines as our country encounters various natural disasters.

Aside from this, data science is being applied in agriculture through the Project SARAI or Smarter Approaches to Reinvigorate Agriculture as an Industry in the Philippines. It uses data to reduce climate risks by providing agricultural stakeholders with site-specific crop advisories. In health, we have repurposed significant digital technologies and innovation. With data, we monitored the spread of COVID-19 disease through our surveillance and modeling platform. We also used RxBox, a telemedical device that transmits vital statistics data to specialists who analyze the patient's status remotely. This has been useful not just in the pandemic but even until now in supporting most especially the rural health units in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas or "GIDAS" in the Philippines. Lastly, we use satellite data for environment to also assess the air quality, pollution, and other geographical observations.

Excellencies,

These have demonstrated the evident benefits of data analytics and utilization. However, we must also be aware of the possible adverse impact this can create such as in widening the gap within and among countries of different economic capacities. This heightens the call for addressing digital divide, promoting inclusivity, and ensuring connectivity.

We must all benefit from the power of data.

Globally accepted framework, reliable infrastructure, and fair and just regulations and standards must be put in place not just for the leaders at the forefront of data revolution. These elements and key factors must be established especially for the developing countries. Human resources must be upskilled and/or reskilled to be able to maximize the use of data in its full capacity. Policies that are relevant to the current issues posed by the risks of using these data should also be developed by these countries. International policy discussions on cybercrime convention and the ethics of AI, as well as national policies such as the Philippines' laws on cybercrime prevention and data privacy.

Developing countries may work with each other, also through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and with developed countries. Benchmarking on the best practices, learning from the lessons of one another and seizing opportunities for partnerships would create an enabling environment and ecosystem for everyone to benefit from this innovative leap while considering risks. The CSTD plays a significant role in providing an avenue for the Member States and other stakeholders to come together, exchange ideas and information and initiate joint activities that would ensure that data would create solutions for everyone.

Research. Recommend policies. Capacitate. Collaborate. These are what we can do for now as we explore the future of data.

Thank you.