INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)

Geneva, Switzerland
21-22 October 2024

CSTD 2024-2025 priority theme on "Diversifying economies in a world of accelerated digitalization"

Statement submitted by

The Philippines

<div align="center">

PHILIPPINE INTERVENTION

CSTD 2024-2025 Intersessional Panel Meeting
21-22 October 2024 | Geneva, Switzerland

**PRIORITY THEME 1: DIVERSIFYING ECONOMIES IN A WORLD OF
ACCELERATED DIGITALIZATION**
21 October 2024 | 3:00-6:00 PM session

DR. LEAH J. BUENDIA
Undersecretary for Research and Development
Department of Science and Technology
Republic of the Philippines

</div>

Thank you very much, Chair.

First of all, we would like to thank the CSTD Secretariat for preparing the issues paper and for considering the contributions of the Member States, including the Philippines'.

Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

The paper highlights that economic diversification is crucial in economic growth and national development. The Philippines welcomes this timely discussion on economic diversification in the face of rapid digitalization. As highlighted in the issues paper, the global economy is shifting from traditional export-oriented industrialization to technology-driven transformation.

The Philippines is embracing this shift by leveraging frontier technologies including artificial intelligence or AI, big data, and digital innovations to drive inclusive and sustainable growth. Our efforts in the Philippines focus on building robust data infrastructure, integrating digital solutions across sectors like agriculture, health, environment, transportation, smart communities and cities, manufacturing, and services while fostering innovation ecosystems that create opportunities, especially in underserved regions in the country.

While the country works to address the challenges on data, infrastructure and skills, the government have put in place inclusive policies for innovation and economic diversification tailored to diffusion of digital technologies and AI. The Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 emphasizes enhancing innovation and technological adoption across sectors. There is also a Philippine Innovation Act which creates the National Innovation Council (NIC) to develop and implement innovation policies. It

promotes research and development (R&D) activities, offering tax breaks and incentives for companies investing in innovation and frontier technologies.

The Philippines has also developed a National AI Roadmap to guide the development and adoption of AI technologies across different sectors. The roadmap reflects plans to create an AI research and development ecosystem, promote AI adoption across industries, and develop AI talent through education and training programs.

Several policies and programs were also initiated to promote digitalization, AI, and Industry 4.0 technologies in various sectors including the:

- The Technology Transfer Act that aims to promote and facilitate the transfer of technology from research institutions to industry;
- The Innovative Startup Act which provides incentives for operationalization of innovative new businesses;
- The Technology Business Incubation (TBI) Program establishing innovation hubs and technology incubators; and,
- The Digital Cities 2025 to highlight the value of countryside development to become thriving business districts and viable investment hubs for Information Technology and Business Process Management services.

Lastly, the Philippines provides financial support to research and development activities and accelerate the commercialization of innovative products through the Startup Research Grant Program of our Department of Science and Technology.

Various programs such as (i) the Smarter Approaches to Reinvigorate Agriculture as an Industry in the Philippines or "Project SARAI" for smart crop advisories, (ii) the Agricultural Robot - Tomasino Innovation Systems for robotic hand tractors guided by GPS sensor, (iii) the HazardHunterPH, a web application for multiple hazard assessment useful for different industries, and (iv) the Advanced Manufacturing Center (AMCen) for machine learning in additive manufacturing were created in collaboration with different stakeholders in the country.

Aside from the AI Roadmap, the Philippines has also developed the Industry 4.0 Roadmap that outlines a strategic plan for transitioning Philippine industries towards Industry 4.0 by promoting technologies like automation, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Excellencies and colleagues, the Philippines acknowledges the challenges with respect to responsible use of AI including:

- Apparent discrimination of "digital minorities" or digitally marginalized groups due to lack of material data for training and enhancing AI;
- Unintentional use of AI to further marginalize individuals who already have limited access to AI tools, while their data is being exploited for unethical purposes; and

Theme 1

- Proliferation of *"deepfakes"* as a powerful tool for spreading disinformation and manipulation. In the Philippines, where social media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, *deepfakes* can be weaponized to distort political narratives, smear individuals, and erode trust in institutions.

We recognize the necessity of and call for the establishment of AI Code of Conduct with a sense of urgency. The Philippines also supports the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI highlighting the importance of right to privacy and data protection, responsibility, and accountability, and ensuring that AI development and deployment align with fundamental human rights, dignity, and societal values.

Excellencies and colleagues, international cooperation opens up collaboration opportunities and benchmarking activities ensuring mutual advantages. The CSTD can serve as a vital platform for the exchange of proposals, ideas, experiences, and intellectual thought aimed at developing impactful policies for the benefit of all. Dialogues may be conducted to set up innovation strategies, collaborate on technical cooperation projects, and develop global consensus on ethical guidelines. The CSTD can also create networks among Member States and with NGOs and other stakeholders related to science, technology, and innovation.

In the age of accelerated digitalization, we hope that the UN principle of leaving no one behind remains evident in our collaborations. May this platform serve as an avenue for co-beneficial and inclusive partnerships.

Thank you.