

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

**Geneva, Switzerland
21-22 October 2024**

**Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to WSIS outcomes at the regional
and international levels**

Statement submitted by

Holy See

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Statement of H.E. Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, Apostolic Nuncio
and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the **2024-2025 Inter-sessional Panel of the
United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development**
Geneva, 21 – 22 October 2024

Mr. Chair,

My Delegation would like to express its gratitude to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) for organizing this's year Inter-sessional Panel.

Engaging with the digital environment is an integral part of our daily experience. In recent years, rapid advancements in the digital sphere have touched upon the essential nodes of human existence, necessitating a creative effort of thought and action.¹ Among such efforts, the adoption of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) represents a significant milestone in fostering international cooperation. It is important to bear in mind that the potential benefit that humanity will be able to draw from digital progress depends on the degree to which the new possibilities at our disposal are employed in an ethical manner.²

In this regard, the CSTD can play an important role in examining science and technology questions with an enhanced focus on digital equity. In particular, the Holy See would like to draw attention to three specific areas.

First, the CSTD is uniquely positioned to advance discussions on the governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI), informed by the multidisciplinary Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and Policy Dialogue established under the GDC. In this regard, the CSTD can, *inter alia*, facilitate the creation of comprehensive guidelines for the ethical development of AI, enhance capacity building in developing Countries, provide a forum to share best practices, and foster partnerships. These efforts can be instrumental in finalizing an ethical framework for the governance of AI that would underpin an international instrument regulating the development and use of AI in its many forms.³

Second, AI technologies rely on two pillars: computing capacity and data. These must be harnessed in order to fully benefit from the promises of these systems. Therefore, the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen computing capacity in developing countries, coupled with a framework for data governance, should underpin efforts in this area.

Finally, my Delegation wishes to reaffirm that “each person must have access to the level of well-being necessary for his full development.”⁴ Consequently, universal, meaningful, and affordable access to digital technology and connectivity as a means of ensuring the well-being of the individual must be guaranteed to all, including those living in rural and remote areas, as well as in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs.).

¹ Cfr. Pope Francis, Video Message to the Pontifical Council for Culture, 23 November 2021.

² Cfr. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, nos. 102-105.

³ Cfr. Pope Francis, Message for the 57th World Day of Peace, Rome, 1 January 2024, n. 8.

⁴ Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, n. 172.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.