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**High-level roundtable on “The role of STI in empowering people and in  
ensuring inclusiveness and equality”**

Statement submitted by

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The Philippine Development Plan (2017 to 2022) includes a chapter on vigorously advancing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to enhance the social fabric, reduce inequality and increase potential growth.

Allow me to take this opportunity to share 4 Philippine examples of leveraging STI to empower people and ensure inclusiveness and equality.

The first example is on gender equality. The Philippine Magna Carta for Women of 2009 is a comprehensive women's human rights law that includes the provision that all government agencies must perform Gender and Development (GAD) planning and budgeting, using no less than 5% of agency budget. For example, the percentage of female R&D project leaders is 44%, and we require all R&D products to be gender-sensitive. Any product of R&D must be easy to use by both men and women.

The second example is on inclusiveness. Our S&T scholarships and R&D funding strike a balance between excellence and equity, ensuring opportunity is maximized across the archipelago. We have increased S&T scholarship by a factor of 10 in the last 10 years and deliberately funded R&D in universities in the countryside for economically-relevant products and services in their area.

The third example is on MSMEs. 99.5% of the total number of establishments in the Philippines are MSMEs. They employ 62.8% of the total labor force and contributes 35.7% of total value added to the economy. We believe STI is the key to increasing the productivity of MSMEs and we have a program that offers technology intervention from as simple as food safety training to automation of MSMEs to improve productivity and global competitiveness. We target 3,000 to 5,000 MSMEs per year.

The fourth example is rural impact sourcing through capacity building in the countryside for employment through online freelancing industry. Unemployed individuals are now working as digital marketer, graphic arts designer, and other digital jobs. The digital divide was crossed and benefited bottom of the pyramid.

For the international community, we believe that CSTD can encourage the free or low-cost transfer of technologies for public good especially those that address SDG 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. For example, the Philippines shared technologies in remote sensing to ASEAN Member States for Disaster Risk Reduction through hazard mapping and technologies under Genomics for Climate Change Resilience to develop varieties that are climate resilient. There are many other technologies that can accelerate the achievement of SDGs, we just need to deliberately balance competition with public good.