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**Discussion on “Exploring space technologies for sustainable development and
the benefits of international research collaboration in this context”**

Introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General

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Presentation of the SG Report on

Exploring space technologies for sustainable development and the benefits of international research collaboration in this context

CSTD Virtual Session, 11 June 2020, 14:45

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honored to present the Report of the Secretary-General on this subject matter.

I would like to thank all the Member States, UN agencies, and other organizations that provided valuable contributions for the report through written inputs and in-depth discussions at the CSTD inter-sessional meeting, UNOOSA World Space Forum, and regional consultations held in Africa, and Asia and the Pacific.

Space technologies have the enormous potential to contribute to numerous SDGs and also the COVID-19 response. The report documents applications in poverty mapping (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), natural resources and environment management (SDG 13), and more.

For example, earth observation data is being used to map areas of land cover, develop crop yield estimates, and support early warning for drought and other disasters.

The remote-sensing technologies are used to monitor and forecast disease patterns and spread.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, public health officials across the world are using aggregated, anonymized GPS data (based on the Global Navigation Satellite Systems) to understand how communities are complying with social distancing and stay-at-home orders.

The increasing availability of open data and new technological developments like machine learning, big data, and cloud computing are lowering the costs of using, adopting and adapting space technologies.

Promising applications and technological developments are numerous. But several constraints hinder the effective application of space technologies in developing countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Secretary General's report underscores that space-based applications can be utilized by all countries, whether they have spacefaring capabilities or not. Satellite data are increasingly made available for free or at low cost.

What matters most is that countries, regions, and the international community build the human and technological capabilities to transform Earth observation and other space-derived data into intelligence—early warning for disasters and disease outbreaks, and monitoring crop health, for example.

At the national level, countries need to invest in awareness building, physical and data infrastructure, human capacity, research & development, and innovation capabilities of firms.

Some regions are supporting the development of regional policies and spatial data infrastructure to strengthen national efforts. The Report highlights the adoption of the African Space Policy and Strategy and efforts within the Asia-Pacific region to develop a plan of action for using space for sustainable development as coordinated by UNESCAP.

Finally, international cooperation is essential for helping countries effectively share access to space-based physical infrastructure, data, digital assets, and services. Such collaboration can help countries pool human, physical, financial, and other resources to create global public goods that accelerate our progress on the SDGs and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

And intergovernmental platforms such as the CSTD will continue to provide a platform for sharing national experiences and space commons, and launching international collaboration efforts.

In conclusion, space technology and satellite data hold the potential to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

National policies, public-private partnerships, and international cooperation are essential elements for building the awareness, infrastructure, and human resources needed to ensure that the benefits of space can be widely shared by all.

Thank you.