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**Using science, technology and innovation to close the gap on Sustainable
Development Goal 3, good health and well-being**

Statement submitted by

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**Intervention by H.E Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Ambassador/PR of Nepal at the
24th Session of the United Nations Commission on Science and
Technology for Development (CSTD), under Agenda Item 3 (a): Using science,
technology, and innovation to close the gap on Sustainable Development.
Goal 3, on good health and wellbeing, Geneva, 18 May 2021**

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Thank you Chair.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates

At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for the report and the panellists for their insightful presentations.

Application of science, technology and innovation in primary health care, poverty-related and infectious diseases; need of digital health care along with the policy recommendations as pointed out in the Secretary General's report gives us a wholesome picture of the necessity for national health-care innovations and digital technologies to effectively address health-related issues.

The financial gap between developed and developing countries limits the potential promise of digital health, which is further aggravated by the technological capacity gaps.

The mechanisms such as access to benefits and sharing, patent pooling and intellectual property rights pledges as highlighted by the report would enable least developed countries to access health care technologies. Consolidated multi-stakeholder efforts at national, regional and global level could potentially leverage benefits of digital health technologies. Likewise, waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement would enhance broader access to COVID-19 vaccines in the developing countries.

There have been considerable discussions and developments in this regard since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Countries and organizations came forward with several mechanisms to cope up with the pandemic, and in a span of a year fortunately, countries have rolled out vaccination program against this life-threatening virus. This has all been possible through scientific

innovations in the field of health and vaccines. However, as has been pointed out by the WHO Director General, it is disheartening to note that high- and upper-middle income countries have received 83% of the world's vaccines while low- and lower-middle countries have received just 17% of the world's vaccines. This substantial gap of vaccination must be addressed immediately if we are to reduce the gap in the health sector for the attainment of SDG 3. In this regard, we deeply appreciate the United States' taking the lead in and recent announcement of vaccine sharing to low-income countries in critical need. We urge all other countries in a position to do so to follow the suit.

In the case of my country Nepal, despite being an LDC, significant improvements have been made on its SDG goal of ensuring healthy lives, and promoting wellbeing by reducing infant mortality, child mortality, and maternal mortality rates and is committed to achieving the goal by 2030. However, as we fight against the pandemic, lack of essential health technologies, diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines, equipment, and vaccines in the country has posed a serious challenge to ensuring the right to health of our citizens. We have appealed the international community for providing us immediate support in terms of vaccines and essential medical supplies at this critical stage.

Nepal has framed two major policies regarding Science, Technology and Innovation in terms of National Science Technology and Innovation Policy 2019 (NST&I Policy 2019) and Digital Nepal Framework 2019. The Government is currently finalizing the activities for the implementation of the NST&I Policy 2019, proposing 155 activities for a period of 10 years. Such activities are expected to upgrade Nepal's position in Global Innovation Index.

We have been facing formidable challenges of limited finance, limited STI base and infrastructure, digital divide, and technological, institutional and human capacity gap in order to ensure the constitutional rights to health and wellbeing.

In this regard, we underline the need for strong international support and solidarity to enable the LDCs to achieve the SDG target of health and wellbeing through the use of science, technology and innovation.

I thank you.