

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
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**Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the  
World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international  
level**

Keynote remarks by

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Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to today's discussion.

In a world of increasingly rapid technological advancement, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development must play an important role within the UN System; this includes keeping Member States apprised of developments and helping to maintain momentum on efforts to bridge the global digital divide.

Today's discussion follows last month's Thematic Debate on Digital Cooperation and Connectivity in the General Assembly, as well as ECOSOC's Science, Technology and Innovation forum, and the General Assembly plenary on rapid technological changes. Together, this series of events demonstrates a United Nations that prioritizes a better understanding and utilization of science and technological advancement. As evidenced by the declaration that came out of the digital debate, when the UN General Assembly convenes around a topic, the world takes notice. This is particularly so when an issue is prioritized time and again, as we have seen over the last several weeks on digitization and technological advancement. I commend Member States and the UN System for continuing to push forward on this.

Dear colleagues,

If there is one message that has come out of the discussions this past month it is that we must move quickly to close a digital divide that is holding back progress across the entirety of the SDGs. With particularly strong implications for young people, who are being denied decent work, and for women and girls, who are 25% less likely to be connected, the divide is quickly becoming the new face of inequality, resulting in digital-haves and digital have-nots.

What we must reconcile here today is the role that we, as policymakers, can and must play in moving the needle in the right direction.

Harnessing the potential of global advancements requires a whole-of-society approach, with governments work closely with all stakeholders, including tech companies, communities, and citizens, to regulate the digital economy and to create an enabling policy space.

Good digital governance means more predictability, which is good for entrepreneurs and businesses, as well as more adherence to principles of equality, privacy, and human rights. As the United Nations, we have a role to play in working with countries to advance each of these areas, including by providing much needed capacity support, resources, and sharing of best practices.

Colleagues, the UN and the General Assembly must continue to prioritize science, technology and innovation, not least of which by supporting policymakers in understanding this fast-changing context and by encouraging the development and utilization of mechanisms that help

advance the digital agenda. This is all the more important in light of the global pandemic and increased significance of the digital divide.

As we move forward, both during discussions today but also in the weeks and months ahead, I hope that we can continue to link sustainable development to digital access, and fuse these streams together in such a way that we consistently and meaningfully address both in all our endeavors.

Thank you.