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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**

Statement submitted by

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The Philippine Statement

High-level panel on 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

To be delivered during the 25th Session of CSTD to be held in a hybrid format in Geneva

28 March -01 April 2022

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 levels

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Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Good evening from the Philippines.

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered the way we live, work, and relate to one another. While these disruptions led to unprecedented consequences, it has likewise paved the way for the development of new forms of communications, technologies, and services. The role of digital technologies has been substantial and evolves at an exponential pace where transformation is evident in the entire system.

The Philippines, through the Department of Science and Technology or DOST, achieved technology breakthroughs, such as management systems, high-performance computing and cloud facilities, and AI-driven models that were used for COVID-19 response activities. Such efforts were recognized by UNCTAD, placing the Philippines as one of the top overperformers worldwide, second to India, in terms of frontier technologies readiness index in 2021.

While digital technologies have driven innovations, they are also heavily criticized for widening social and economic inequalities around the world. UNCTAD's Technology and Innovation Report 2021 presented the critical 5A's – availability, affordability, awareness, accessibility, and ability for effective use – in moving towards the digital world. The Philippines, though one of the top performers, has lower rankings for ICT connectivity and skills.

Despite this rank in ICT, the Philippines undertook important research efforts in bridging the digital divide. We did this by utilizing UHF TV bands that made it possible to develop low-cost, small-scale LTE base stations to address the lack of internet access in remote and unserved areas in the country, and by shifting from Analog to Digital TV to develop and deliver educational digital content to farfetched areas.

The Philippines moves forward in exploring beyond mature 4G technology and anticipates efforts to accelerate research and bring down the cost of 5G development. Also, Philippine start-ups that specialize in education technology have significantly contributed to the new normal in education delivery.

Excellencies, the Philippines is one with you in strengthening partnerships – local and international, public and private, to overcome this digital divide. For the government to successfully cope with the digital transformation, all sectors of society should have a role in ensuring that we leave no one and no place behind.

Thank you.