

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-fifth session
Geneva, 28 March - 1 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
level**

Statement submitted by

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Address by H.E. Ambassador Margit Szűcs, Permanent Representative of Hungary

Agenda item 2 (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) at the 25th Session of the CSTD

Thank You, Mr Chair,

Honourable Colleagues, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen!

The issues covered by today's high-level round-table are as timely as ever, and we are glad to have the opportunity to share with you the following three key reflections from the perspective of Hungary.

Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on our societies. The role of digital technologies in the response to the pandemic has been immense. Spanning from e-Health to e-Education, from e-Commerce to e-Governance, the use of these technologies have allowed us to mitigate some of the most serious consequences of the pandemic.

For example, advances in the field of health, digital solutions, and a global network fostering the exchange of information and scientific collaboration have made it possible to develop the safe and effective vaccine in record time. We must highlight the immense role of a Hungarian scientist in particular, Ms Katalin Karikó, who pioneered mRNA technology, and who was kind enough to participate at last year's CSTD session as a keynote speaker. During the pandemic we have made considerable efforts in further developing telemedicine with the introduction of a nation-wide cloud based health care platform. Additionally, we could also cite here the various scientific projects aided by supercomputing, or the central role of big data and data sciences have played in pandemic control and surveillance. On the front of e-Education, Hungary has introduced technology enabled remote education during the lockdowns, aided by cloud solutions. The pandemic has also accelerated the ongoing shift towards e-Commerce, and the widespread utilization of remote work.

Secondly, we must face that all these beneficial use of technologies to mitigate the effects of the pandemic have also revealed some key challenges. For example, one of the most pressing challenges was the issue of inequality. As a response to mitigate this phenomenon, we have provided students coming from poorer backgrounds free internet access and digital tools, laptops, in order to facilitate their continued participation in online education. We were particularly encouraged by the success of the Digital Solidarity Initiative, whereby the actors of the digital sector helped the transition to remote education by significant donations. by donations came to the aid by offering digital solutions. In an effort to alleviate the economic strain on the budgets of the families and young people, Hungary has introduced a comprehensive income tax rebates and tax exemption for families with children, and people under the age of 25.

On a broader horizon, the changes accelerated by the pandemic will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the world of work, with the widespread use of remote work and the emergence of the gig economy. Additionally, concerns regarding data protection and privacy, the regulation of AI, or the human rights implications of emerging new technologies – just to

name a few – represent topics that we need to raise and debate, with a view to address them both on a national and on an international level. Bringing us to our last point, Mr Chair.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our view that fostering international cooperation and applying a multi-stakeholder approach remain key in the post-pandemic world. Thus, the importance of forums such as the CSTD cannot be overstated. For they allow the members of the international community to engage in dialogue and exchange views and best practices on some of the crucial issues at the intersection of science, technology and development. Our rich discussions contribute to the efforts aiming the realisation of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the Bureau, including Vice-President Peter Major; their commitment have been instrumental in the success of the CSTD. In this spirit, Hungary remains engaged in the work of the CSTD.

Thank you for your attention.