

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-seventh session
Geneva, 15-19 April 2024**

Data for Development

Statement by

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**United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development
(CSTD) Twenty-seventh annual session**

**High-level panel on
“Data for Development”**

16 April 2024,

**Angolan Minister of Higher Education, Science Technology and Innovation,
HON Maria do Rosário Bragança, Statement**

Angola, with a population exceeding 30 million, shares a common challenge with many African nations: the pressing need to enhance technological systems, structures, and corporate frameworks, and bolster investments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) while also empowering the workforce to adapt to the technological revolution experienced in other countries.

Despite government efforts in investing in new technological infrastructures, Angola still lags behind in adopting new technologies. Diversifying the economy and substantially reducing poverty remain key challenges for the Angolan state, with a primary focus on elevating living standards and facilitating sustainable economic growth. Updating the Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policy with an emphasis on new technologies could present an alternative model for Angola's diversification and fostering sustainable economic development.

The existing ICT infrastructure and support personnel fall short, warranting a critical need to broaden and diversify funding for digital infrastructure in the immediate and long term. This includes improving reliable internet access and ensuring efficient data collection, storage, and transmission across the country.

Among the objectives outlined in the National Development Plan 2023-2027, there is an emphasis on enhancing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Research and Development (R&D) Organizations to international standards. This involves supplying appropriate infrastructure to foster an enriching environment for education and learning, as well as enticing the development of scientific research, technology transfer, and innovation.

In this context, we are championing ICT programs in higher education institutions to bolster the number of graduates in this field, foster research in cyber-physical systems and advanced computing and communication technologies (including machine learning, big data, intelligent systems, cyber security, and robotics). An essential initiative is the development of master's and doctoral courses in artificial intelligence, integrating specialized studies in computer science.

Recognizing the significance of ICT, the Angolan Executive has passed laws and regulations such as the Personal Data Protection Law and the establishment of the National Data Protection Agency, a public entity tasked with managing and setting guidelines for the processing of personal data, with the aim of upholding public freedom and fundamental rights.

To further this objective, the Angolan Government is implementing measures to progressively and sustainably enhance the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, with a specific focus on the data and technology sector. The Government aims to foster collaboration between academia and industry, establish incubators and similar entities to foster entrepreneurship within academia, transform research into tangible products, and drive the establishment of new companies (start-ups).

Nonetheless, for these actions to be successful and sustainable, it is essential to establish partnerships and collaborate with development agencies and international organizations for accessing specialized knowledge, technological

resources, and best practices in data and technology management that promote sustainable development.

Angola has benefitted greatly from partnerships in the adoption of ICT. A range of partnerships with international organizations, companies, and governments is underway in various sectors of the domestic market, including collaboration with entities such as the United Nations, the European Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and leading companies in the banking sector.

Angola plays an active role in international dialogues, forums, and conferences focused on data governance and global collaboration, aligning with established international standards and frameworks for data governance developed by organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Bank.

By leveraging the potential of data and new technologies, Angola can drive innovation and entrepreneurship, enhance decision-making processes, and ultimately contribute to the increased well-being and prosperity of its citizens.