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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, in particular WSIS+20 review**

Statement by

H.E. Archbishop Ettore Balestrero
Apostolic Nuncio
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN
and other international organizations in Geneva

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Statement of H.E. Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, Apostolic Nuncio
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 28th Session of the
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Geneva, 9 April 2025

Theme 1: Development of information technology since WSIS

Mr. Chair,

The evolutions of information technology since the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has exerted a profound influence on economic, social, and governance structures worldwide. This offers new opportunities for development. Nevertheless, considerable disparities persist in the deployment and accessibility to emerging technologies. Many developing countries still lack the infrastructure, resources, and expertise to harness them effectively.

My Delegation wishes to express its concerns regarding the significant lack of progress in achieving affordable and meaningful universal connectivity, particularly in the least developed countries. Reliable broadband connectivity is not a goal in itself. In today's digitalized world, reduced connectivity means, *inter alia*, a lack of education and employment opportunities, hindered access to social services and limited economic participation.

While technologies, including emerging ones such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), offer new solutions to a wide range of challenges, the misconception that technologies can solve all problems must be avoided. In fact, such a “technocratic paradigm” side-lines human dignity, fraternity and social justice in the name of efficiency.¹ Instead, new technologies should be put “at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral.”²

Moreover, it is essential to recognize that emerging technologies pose significant risks in various fields, including the commodification of education, the negative impact on workers, the virtualization of human relations, the spread of deep fakes and misinformation, and serious privacy violations.

In addition, my Delegation underscores the urgency of governance of AI, given the enormous opportunities and parallel risks presented by this technology. Moreover, the concentration of power over mainstream AI applications in the hands of a few companies, raises significant ethical concerns.³

¹ Cfr. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, n. 105.

² Ibidem, n. 112.

³ Cfr. Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith and Dicastery for Culture, *Antiqua et Nova*: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence, n. 53.

The ongoing process of drafting the Terms of Reference of the Scientific Panel on AI proposed in the Global Digital Compact represents a first step in the right direction towards a balanced and risk-based approach to AI governance. Ethical regulatory frameworks should ensure that AI promotes real progress and that all legal entities remain accountable for the use of AI and all its consequences, with appropriate safeguards for transparency, privacy, and accountability.⁴

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

⁴ Cfr. Pope Francis, Address to the Participants in the “Minerva Dialogues”, 27 March 2023.