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Item 2: Panel discussion on Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes at the regional and international levels"

Statement submitted by

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ICC BASIS Intervention at the 20th session of CSTD

delivered by Timea Suto

Good morning,

I would like to thank the panel today and yesterday for their presentations and the rich content we have to consider and discuss this week.

Before I share some reflections on WSIS review follow up I'd like to briefly present the organization I am representing.

The International Chamber of Commerce is the world business organization founded in 1919 with the aim of promoting peace and prosperity through world trade. Today ICC's network includes more than 6 million member companies in over 100 countries, spanning large multinational companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as chambers of commerce and business and trade associations from all regions of the world and across all sectors of economic activity.

ICC convened business during WSIS in Geneva and Tunis and its preparatory processes. Through ICC's Business Action to support the information society (ICC BASIS), it has since contributed business experience and expertise to the post-WSIS activities including the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the WSIS action lines forum and this Commission, among others.

This brings me back to our discussion here today.

Considerable progress has been made since the WSIS, in large part because of the forward looking framework established by the WSIS principles and action lines.

The emphasis placed by the WSIS outcomes on bridging the variety of digital divides is important. The Internet has already had a transformational effect on our societies. ICC and the chorus of business voices we represent feel strongly that connected ICTs offer great potential to work collaboratively towards the 2030 goals and deliver a brighter and more prosperous future for all.

The majority, if not all, of the sustainable development goals can benefit from the application of ICTs, both using emerging and existing technologies.

But, as we've heard today and on numerous other occasions, every country has specific gaps to overcome in striving for the SDGs and will need to determine what policies will best leverage ICTs in support of the Goals to fit their particular circumstances.

This is why ICC through its Commission on the Digital Economy aims to illustrate how the ICT ecosystem works in practice and highlight its essential role in advancing the 2030 Agenda and help decision-makers and stakeholders have a comprehensive view on the complexity of the ecosystem and the different policy elements which support leveraging ICT for sustainable

economic development.

Soon the Digital Economy Commission will launch a policy statement which articulates the views of global business and underscore how ICT can be used to relieve poverty, access education, provide healthcare and reduce CO2 emissions. To sustain opportunities in the long run and ensure efforts are impactful across geographies and cultures, the statement highlights the contributions business and other stakeholders bring to policymaking efforts.

ICC aims to increase policymakers' understanding of the importance of an interoperable, seamless ICT ecosystem that is crucial to help populations reap the benefits of ICT and further development opportunity. In the policy statement, ICC explains how this ecosystem is built on three layers: an accessible and affordable infrastructure that enables the development of appropriate applications and services coupled with the ability of the user to actively and independently use the technology.

This layered ecosystem can only function if supported by effective policy approaches.

Stakeholders play key roles in ensuring the necessary well-informed and targeted policy approaches.

For example, regarding SDG 5 on gender equality calls for enhanced use of ICT to promote the empowerment of women. And we have heard here a number of contributions on what value this brings and how it can be achieved.

Engaging relevant stakeholders in policymaking can help drive meaningful ICT access for women. The private sector plays a pivotal role in deploying Internet related infrastructure and delivering a wide range of ICT services. Business also contributes to encouraging access through capacity building and education initiatives, promoting innovation, public-private research and development partnerships, where businesses work with other stakeholders. Civil society and technical community are also important to consult to ensure well-informed policy approaches. For example, civil society can advise on societal and cultural factors within social groups that may impact women's access and use of ICT. The technical community lends its invaluable expertise by advising on technical capabilities of infrastructure and technology.

By encouraging the participation of all relevant stakeholders in policy-making processes, governments can generate policies that are timely, scalable, and innovation enabling.

The CSTD plays a critical role in addressing science and technology issues that affect economic and social development and the follow up of the WSIS. Global business attaches great value to the CSTD's commitment to work on these issues and to business participation in these meetings. We remain ready and willing to work together with the CSTD and its members as they consider appropriate policy steps for the advancement of SDGs through ICTs.

Thank you, Chair.