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Group D Statements

Statements delivered by
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Agenda Item 2: High-level segment: Inequality – a drag on reducing poverty and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals

(c) Digital development: Opportunities and challenges

Mr. President, Secretary General, Excellences, honoured Delegates,

I speak on behalf of Group D and its Member States.

Digital agenda is here, and it will remain with us. Digitalization has presented us an opportunity for development, but it also has its challenges. Coming from the region of countries with economies in transition, we know how important is the mind-setting for innovative, open and future-oriented policy-making. Thus – when discussing the digital development - first comes the mind-set.

The practicalities follow. E-commerce, self-driving vehicles, distant medical interventions, 3D-printing, AI, etc. – they all change the value chains; they also enforce us to revisit the IP-related aspects and the taxation of goods and ideas; they support broadening the amount of potential customers, etc. – so many related topics are interrelated and influenced. While speaking of challenges, it is also important to understand that digitalization does not steal the jobs from humans. Instead, it will change the fields of jobs while creating many new ones, most of which are even beyond our imagination today – and this represent the key moment where we need the positive and forward-looking mind-set. Digitalization will also change the *modus operandi* of how do we work - in many fields, the job-place localization is already history. But, even more, the digitalization helps us to create MSMEs and empower the least empowered ones – the women. Of course – it also helps us to bring the youth and young people to believe in themselves; to believe, that all is possible with innovation and that they can master their own future. The future is digital, and the youth is the future, thus digital and youth are synonyms.

Regarding challenges, it is important that no-one is left behind. UNCTAD DTL does very good job on this, our congratulations: the many rapid e-Trade readiness analysis, comprehensive global analysis on related national legislations, etc. – it is an important practical contribution to the digital development agenda.

Dear colleagues,

Final element we would like to address is the technical cooperation. UNCTAD can play a good role of bringing the aid requests and donor community together. We would like to hear more,

of how many digitalization related aid projects have been submitted via the technical cooperation database, and what is their status. We look forward to hear a robust answer today, but we also request for a dedicated Member States briefing on this.

To conclude, let me say, that we were quite satisfied with the content and temper of the proposed policy recommendations, but some further amendments would have been needed - especially addressing the special focus on youth and young people, and on the MSMEs.

Thank you.