Economic and Social Council

Commission for Social Development
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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
Priority Theme: Socially just transition towards sustainable
development: the role of digital technologies on social
development and well-being of all**

Statement submitted by Transdiaspora Network in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

When we speak of ICT, we refer to the convergent set of technologies fundamentally developed in the field of microelectronics, computers, telecommunications and their set of developments and applications. Despite the fact that the ideal role of technology is to close the gap between different social sectors, there is a risk that technological transformations will rather increase inequality, however the digitization of information and the ability to share information can work for human development, thus focusing on its potential to benefit developing countries and the poorest people.

Nowadays, not all people yet have access to these opportunities for productivity and well-being. When we talk about social inequality you are denouncing a serious problem that affects all spheres of society. A very small portion of humanity has access to technologies and those who are part of it are getting updated more and more in these skills, causing a large gap between those who travel long distances in a short time and those who have not even begun to make continuous use of them.

Education must be built and evolve in a process of social inclusion of new technologies and governments should be responsible for pushing for investments in education to reach all inhabitants. Among the advantages of technology in education, we find access to alternative teaching materials, autonomous learning, teamwork is encouraged, and communication is improved. Companies, at the same time, within their corporate social responsibility policy and actions, must also practice proper ethics in their relationships, generate equal opportunities and operate with tolerance criteria. We have to remember that new technologies do not seek to replace human skills, but rather serve as tools to support human activities, thinking of greater benefit for the population. Technology is a part of the innovation of the human being which helps them to function better in their environment and the use of technologies can help us solve problems and needs that are found in our current society.

Technology helps by innovating for growth, improvement or development, in society or the country in order to increase control and understanding of our environment and obtain a better quality of life. One of the major objectives to be met by technology in modern society is to cover rights and basic services in an equitable manner, as well as to ensure the possibilities of production, social participation and sustainability in different societies. Technology has not only helped reduce the distance between people, but also the evolution and growth of communities.

Technologies are also one of the strongest engines to achieve a united and egalitarian society, and within these technologies we find the Internet as the best way to obtain the much desired universal access to information, education and culture. The right of access to the Internet is one of the digital rights that everyone must have in order to exercise and enjoy their rights to freedom of expression among other fundamental human rights that make up democracy. Access to the Internet can make the difference between prosperity or poverty, knowledge or ignorance. And yet, almost half of the world's population does not have the means to connect to the network of networks. All citizens have the right to access the internet regardless of their geographical, personal, social, or economic condition, and all governments must invest in ensuring that all citizens have full freedom of access.

Despite all the benefits that technology can generate in our society, we must also take into account those factors that can create risks, and for this reason, the correct use of technology must be made through the proper use of its advantages and tools. One of the clear risks of intensive use and excessive dependence on technology is that people become apathetic and dependent on machines, laziness increases since everything is achieved as a whole. If more and more individuals are addicted to

technology, we will have apathetic countries to what happens around them; given the little value that these people will assign to what is truly important, the well-being of society. One of the biggest drawbacks of the continued use of technology is, as it was mentioned before, its addiction to it and apart from this one, for us, the most important of all, the control that some companies maintain with the products and data that they collect in their different activities, therefore it is essential that write protection policies against the misuse of technology and the data collected with it.

Technology is not something isolated from economies and societies, but rather evolves with political, social and economic systems. The ability to invest in science and technology is a powerful driver for increasing productivity, and technology diffusion is important not only for revenue, but also for tackling other challenges, such as those related to climate change and gender equality.