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Chair: Mr. Al-thani (Vice-Chair) (Qatar)

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In the absence of Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria), Mr. Al-thani (Qatar), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 15: Information and communications technologies for sustainable development
(continued) (A/77/62–E/2022/8)

Agenda item 20: Globalization and interdependence
(continued) (A/77/214)

(a) Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence (continued) (A/77/253)

(b) International migration and development
(continued) (A/77/236)

1. **Ms. Hapsari** (Indonesia) said that technologies were an important aspect of the Committee's discussions, and access to digital resources and services was a crucial factor for achieving resilience and recovery, but the digital divide remained a constant challenge. There was an undeniable divide between countries, with respect to the use of technologies in the search for solutions and innovation. Challenges varied between countries and regions, but included insufficient human resources, the lack of institutions and the lack of funding. Developing countries were more likely to face all three challenges simultaneously, which was an obstacle to their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Committee should work to ensure the removal of digital barriers.

2. Indonesia reaffirmed its commitment to bridging the digital and knowledge divides and called for concrete action in that connection. Efforts needed to be focused on ensuring access through technology transfers from developed to developing and the least developed countries. South-South and triangular cooperation could enable the digital development of the global South, narrow the development gap and ensure that no one was left behind. At the first meeting of the Group of 20 Digital Economy Working Group, her delegation had stressed the need to foster international cooperation for a more inclusive and empowering sustainable resilience and innovation-driven digital transformation, which would help to achieve the Goals and recovery following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

3. The digital economy was an important and growing part of the global economy and there was a need to leverage experiences and best practices to drive the sustainability of local digital ecosystems. Local micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises were key engines of economic growth and had an essential role to play in the post-pandemic recovery efforts. It was

therefore crucial to support their connectivity and digitalization, by strengthening local digital ecosystems.

4. The international community needed to continue mobilizing resources and financing to ensure the development of digital technology infrastructure and digital literacy in developing countries, in order to address prevailing issues such as climate change and poverty. The first meeting of the Group of 20 Digital Economy Working Group, which had been chaired by Indonesia, had deepened discussions on digital connectivity and post-pandemic recovery, digital skills and digital literacy, cross-border data flows, and other issues associated with digital transformation. Her delegation stood ready to work with all digital stakeholders to build forward better.

5. **Ms. Shmat** (Belarus) said that a multipolar world and a multilateral system of international relations were currently the only possible way of ensuring peaceful coexistence on the planet. Belarus had always been a true supporter of the central role played by the United Nations in the modern world, as an important universal platform where the voice of every State carried equal weight. As sustainable development and a safe and prosperous future was only possible through the joint efforts of all countries, her delegation underscored the importance of regional and global cooperation in various fields, from international trade to environmental protection.

6. Currently, globalization had reached a level where States had such close ties that they could not be absolutely independent of each other's economic processes. While engagement in the global economy had positive aspects, such as forming a single market, it had also laid bare some fundamental differences. For example, rather than strengthening international trade for the achievement of sustainable development and eradication of poverty, globalization had led to the supremacy of some countries and the vulnerability of others. The imposition of unlawful unilateral coercive measures by certain countries against others not only ran counter to the Charter of the United Nations but also undermined international economic cooperation and damaged the interests and needs of those countries, especially developing ones. Western sanctions nullified international cooperation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and exacerbated the problems that had arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy and food crises. Her delegation therefore called for an end to the tendency to use sanctions as a tool for exerting economic pressure. Assistance to middle-income countries and efforts to achieve comprehensive and sustainable industrialization and

avoid the “middle-income trap” had become particularly important.

7. With regard to migration, her country had consistently supported the approaches set out in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Global Compact for Migration) and had submitted national experience on implementing its provisions at the voluntary national reviews held in 2020 and 2022, and also at International Migration Review Forum held in May 2022 in New York. Belarus had a positive view of voluntary and review migration as a phenomenon that could have a favourable impact on the economies of countries and make a contribution to national and regional sustainable development. It fully supported close cooperation among migrants' countries of origin, transit and destination to ensure that the rights and interests of migrants were protected, and Belarus itself enjoyed constructive cooperation with migrants' countries of origin.

8. **Mr. Konate** (Burkina Faso) said that the progress made in the digital arena had exceeded the objectives of the World Summit on the Information Society, but there continued to be a multidimensional digital divide, which needed to be addressed by 2025. Digital technologies had played a crucial role in containing the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring global resilience, by facilitating public health interventions and accelerating monitoring and testing. The time had come to take advantage of the potential of digital transformation to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through international cooperation within the framework of the global digital compact.

9. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) played a key role in public policy in Burkina Faso and the country had adopted a national digital economy development strategy and a national cybersecurity strategy. The use of new communications technologies had allowed for the diversification of social networks, for research and information sharing purposes. The number of households with Internet access had increased in recent years, as had the number of fixed and mobile Internet subscriptions, and the Internet penetration rate stood at 61.57 per cent.

10. Burkina Faso had been experiencing a serious security crisis for over seven years and, in some parts of the country, communications infrastructures had been sabotaged or destroyed, leaving millions of citizens without Internet access. The country's technical and financial partners were invited to support efforts by the national authorities to safeguard and strengthen national digital infrastructures.

11. **Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) said that although the COVID-19 pandemic had been a challenge for all the countries and populations of the world, its impact had not been proportionate in each nation. Those differences had, without doubt, been aggravated by the unjust international economic order, which perpetuated dependency and relegated the countries of the global South to the back burner. Humankind had enough scientific and technical potential and material resources to overcome the pandemic and other challenges, but industrialized countries lacked the political willpower needed to develop just economic and technological relations. Inequality and injustice were worsening in the world, and hunger and poverty rates had significantly increased in recent years, eliminating over four years of constant progress. The external debt of developing countries had increased by billions of dollars, while, paradoxically, global military spending had been on a continuous upward trend.

12. In the light of the pandemic, the unjust international economic order and imbalanced production and trade relations needed to be transformed. Cuba reiterated the legitimacy of and need for a more participative and inclusive new international economic order based on equity, sovereign equality, the common good and cooperation among all States, in which developing countries would intervene on equal terms. A new financial architecture was needed, which would respect the rights and meet the needs of developing countries, and address existing disparities in global trade, which were the result of centuries of exploitation and had perpetuated underdevelopment and dependence. Developing countries needed to achieve significant technological development, so as to overcome structural shortcomings, and required greater access to financing under favourable conditions.

13. Integral solutions were required, in which all States participated and no country was excluded. The multilateral trade system could not be used to impose the interests of a few powerhouses. Protectionist and discriminatory practices that hampered countries' development could not be accepted. For that reason, Cuba rejected the unilateral coercive actions taken by certain States, which undermined the existing multilateral framework, to the detriment of the multilateral solutions needed to surmount the challenges being faced. It also rejected the application of unilateral coercive economic measures, which were incompatible with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and hindered the full realization of the 2030 Agenda and countries' rights, including the right to development.

14. As a result of the economic, trade and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the Government of the United States, his country's economy had been subject to extraordinary pressures, which were manifested in the industrial sector, the delivery of services, the scarcity of food and medicine, and deteriorating consumption and well-being levels within the population. However, despite those obstacles, Cuba continued to make progress. It had tackled COVID-19 with its own vaccines, and sent medical teams to several countries and territories at the height of the pandemic.

15. **Mr. Negash** (Ethiopia) said that ICTs were critical enablers of the 2030 Agenda, since they provided new solutions to development challenges and integrated countries into the digital economy. However, because of uneven access to such technologies and their high costs, the digital and broadband divide had not yet been addressed. Moreover, States were faced with the challenge of preventing and combating the use of ICTs for criminal purposes.

16. Ethiopia had made progress in the digitalization of its economy following the adoption of a national digital strategy aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. It was making successive strides towards creating a conducive legal and regulatory framework to permit ICTs to be more widely used. It had adopted a multidimensional approach, whereby accessibility and affordability facilitated the bridging of the digital divide. In addition to building digitally literate ecosystems, it had intervened to boost the development of low-cost and high-speed connectivity options. However, global digital cooperation was needed to bridge digital divides and accelerate the positive role that digital technologies could play in the achievement of sustainable development. An inclusive information society required effective cooperation that fairly represented developing countries, and the relevant stakeholders needed to provide financial and technical assistance to the countries lagging behind.

17. Ethiopia would be hosting the seventeenth United Nations Internet Governance Forum and affirmed the importance of such multi-stakeholder forums. While globalization could strengthen multilateral cooperation and accelerate sustainable growth and development, the imbalanced distribution of its benefits and costs presented certain challenges and risks. The asymmetrical nature of the current global system rendered the benefits of globalization fundamentally unequal and ultimately unsustainable. Enhanced cooperation and renewed multilateralism were needed to make globalization fairer in the context of sustainable development, and the objectives of the 2030 Agenda needed to be fully reflected in global policies and

intergovernmental platforms. Ethiopia would continue to play its part to strengthen the creation of a multilateral, universal, rules-based, non-discriminatory and equitable global trading system, while supporting the core values of South-South cooperation, and believed that the United Nations could and should play a key role in strengthening common diversity values.

18. International migration was a core feature of the increasingly globalized world and a key driver and consequence of development in both developed and developing countries. It was not a substitute for development, but could be a positive force for the latter, when supported by the right policies. Ethiopia was a country of origin, transit and destination and had taken various institutional, procedural and structural steps to comprehensively advance the objectives of the Global Coalition on Migration. His Government, in an effort to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration, had taken measures to ensure the dignity and safety of its citizens who opted to travel abroad for work. No country could address the issue of migration alone and international cooperation, collaboration and understanding were needed to manage international migration.

19. **Mr. Zhao Haibo** (China) said that the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, geopolitical conflicts, and the food and energy crises were all interrelated, and the North-South development gap and the digital divide were still widening. Those challenges were impeding progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and all countries therefore needed to enhance scientific and technological innovation. Openness and cooperation were needed for joint efforts to meet and address global challenges, so as to achieve innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development. An innovation-driven development strategy should be implemented to fully leverage the opportunities presented by new technologies. A digital economy should be promoted, to give new impetus to the post-pandemic recovery and the socioeconomic development of developing countries.

20. The international community needed to support the United Nations as it coordinated the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and mobilize more resources to help all countries achieve the Goals. Cooperation should be deepened in the area of scientific and technological innovation, to jointly create an open, fair, just and non-discriminatory environment for the development of science, technology, and cooperation. There was a need to fast track progress in the ICT and digital connectivity domains, help developing countries build their capacities, bridge the digital divide and promote the formation of more just and rational international rules,

so that no country or person would be left behind. An open world economy should be actively built, to set economic globalization on a more open, inclusive, universal and balanced path, and give people of all countries equal access to its dividends. Unilateralism and protectionism should be firmly opposed in the quest for stable and smooth global industry supply chains, and the sustainable and inclusive recovery of the world economy needed to be promoted.

21. China remained steadfast in its resolve to open up in a comprehensive manner and establish a new system for enhancing the global economy and sharing development opportunities with all countries. It had launched a Belt and Road digital economy international cooperation initiative, in collaboration with several other countries, and hosted World Internet Conferences and other conventions, in order to actively share its ICT development experience with all parties and promote international cooperation.

22. The Global Development Initiative: building on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for stronger, greener and healthier global development established the digital economy and connectivity in the digital era as priority areas, and was an important platform for enabling all parties to engage in pragmatic cooperation with regard to ICTs. China stood ready to align its development strategy more closely with all parties under the framework of the Global Development Initiative and enhance cooperation in the relevant areas, so that the outcomes of scientific and technological innovation could benefit the peoples of all countries, to facilitate building a global development community with a shared future.

23. **Ms. Alomair** (Saudi Arabia) said that ICT would be a major factor in achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated the adoption of digital technology in numerous areas. ICT occupied a prominent place in her country's Vision 2030 plan, which included the use of digital platforms to enhance economic competitiveness and create jobs. Spreading digital awareness was crucial to ensure that the latest developments could be put to use in various projects, including the NEOM, Qiddiya and Red Sea projects. Closing the digital divide between developed and developing countries should be a priority. Saudi Arabia was a founding member of the Digital Cooperation Organization

24. **Mr. Al Hammaddi** (United Arab Emirates) said that globalization was an important tool for international cooperation, building consensus and meeting global challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with various wars and conflicts, had undermined efforts to

advance prosperity. His country provided assistance to adversely affected developing States without any political considerations.

25. The United Arab Emirates was a major international hub with over 200 nationalities represented among its residents. It had established 10 principles to guide its progress over the next 50 years. It was committed to the multilateral trading system and had joined the initiative on services domestic regulation of the World Trade Organization. It was working to establish comprehensive rules to govern intellectual property rights for individuals and organizations. The digital transformation could not be achieved without assistance to developing countries to bridge the digital divide. The United Arab Emirates supported the Secretary-General's Road Map for Digital Cooperation and had chaired a session of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation.

26. **Ms. Hettiwelige** (Sri Lanka) said that ICTs were critical for advancing the three pillars of sustainable development in Sri Lanka, and had played a substantial role in mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, by enabling greater connectivity and continuity, and contributing to the ways in which governments, businesses and citizens interacted, connected and accessed information and services. However, in the context of the pandemic, the positive impact of ICTs on means of resilience had not been equally felt, since the pandemic had exacerbated inequalities in sectors such as education, economy and health. In that regard, Sri Lanka highlighted the need to address the digital divide and improve access to ICTs, by enhancing digital infrastructure, digital literacy and access to quality and affordable digital resources.

27. Sri Lanka had embarked on a digital transformation initiative under the direction of the Information and Communication Technology Authority and in partnership with other stakeholders. In so doing, it had initiated several projects such as: the implementation of an electronic identity card, to establish a secure and accurate digital identity system with full biometric capabilities; the establishment of an ICT-based court management system to facilitate e-filing and court recording and transcription in an initial 100 courthouses; the setting up and expansion of a trial fifth generation (5G) mobile network to provide citizens with low-latency Internet access; the adoption of a digital Government policy, to digitally transform ministries, departments and Government agencies and improve their delivery of services; and the enacting of a personal data protection act and introduction of an information and cybersecurity strategy, to create a resilient and trusted cybersecurity ecosystem.

28. Her delegation wished to highlight the challenges faced by the countries of the global South and welcomed the technical expertise and contributions of stakeholders such as the United Nations country team in Sri Lanka, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Sri Lanka remained committed to integrating ICT-based solutions in order to achieve its development goals.

29. **Mr. Meshchanov** (Russian Federation) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had not only led to economic difficulties in all countries of the world, but had also hit human potential hard. However, it had also allowed the best of humanity to shine through innovative thinking and solidarity, as had been most clearly demonstrated through the construction of digital infrastructure and by connecting more than a billion people, including schoolchildren, to the Internet within the space of a year. In the context of the new data economy that had emerged, the Committee was the appropriate platform for considering the impact of such changes on the three areas of sustainable development and how to implement the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on Review of the World Summit of the Information Society, with a focus on overcoming the digital divide. Russia attached particular importance to the digitalization of government processes, primarily in terms of providing social services and taxation, to the introduction of artificial intelligence in urban planning, agriculture and transport, and to support for small and medium-sized enterprises in the information technology sector.

30. While the unprecedented technological blockade deployed against Russia had naturally led to changes in the architecture of its information technology infrastructure and in the normal international cooperation landscape, in the mid-term it would not have an impact on his country's effectiveness or on its contribution to achieving comprehensive sustainable economic growth, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The report of the Secretary-General on 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 levels ([A/77/62-E/2022/8](#)) correctly noted the role of digital technology in mitigating the impacts of the pandemic. However, such technology could not fully replace traditional face-to-face forms of communication in education, business and the service sector, and its darker side could be seen in the growth of inequality, a monopolization of growing sectors of the market and a loss of national sovereignty. In that context, his delegation noted with satisfaction the plans to hold

consultations among Member States on the global digital compact. A global national policy on the management of the Internet as regulation by the private sector alone had long proven to be ineffective. At the same time, the Second Committee should focus on development issues and leave discussions on ICT use related to human rights and security to the Third and First Committees, respectively.

31. The costs of digital transformations were a reminder of the importance of curbing uncontrolled globalization as a whole, for which leading global experts had called for a return to dialogue. To avoid further fragmentation of global trade and of the financial system, unilateral economic measures and blockades should be rejected, as should the "cancel culture" against entire peoples and cultures, bloc thinking, the politicization of international financial institutions, the weaponization of reserve currencies, the failure to honour obligations and unfair competition.

32. Until recently, migrants had been seen as the beneficiaries of globalization. Countries of origin, transit and destination were equally interested in organizing and regulating safe, legal and regular migration. His delegation welcomed Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum. Unfortunately, there had been cases of discrimination against migrants, including Russian-speaking migrants in the West, on the grounds of nationality, language, culture and religion, which diminished their contribution to the sustainable development of their host societies. The Committee should take note of such cases. The situation was different in Russia, where the remittances sent by over 10 million people to their home countries had reached record amounts, and they enjoyed the beneficial rate of a 1 per cent tariff on the amount transferred. Russia had the most attractive working conditions for highly qualified experts.

33. Russia had proposed the Greater Eurasian Partnership, alongside the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Regional integration processes were a promising way of integrating migrants in economic life. As part of the Eurasian Economic Union, programmes were being implemented on access to the labour market, basic services, education and social security.

34. **Mr. Ruslan** (Malaysia) said that the current multifaceted crises could be effectively surpassed through enhanced international collaboration, and science, technology and innovation were critical tools for global recovery efforts. In that regard, it was

imperative to ensure that developing countries had swift access to new technologies and digitalization. Enhanced capacity-building in that area was fundamental, especially in vulnerable countries, and bridging the digital divide through strengthened knowledge-sharing, collaboration and the scaling up of related investments had become more crucial than ever on the path to equal and sustainable recovery.

35. Malaysia considered science, technology and innovation to be fundamental to its development efforts and had launched a national policy in that regard for the period 2021–2030, to bridge the socioeconomic divide and progress in its quest to become a sustainable and inclusive high-income country. Several related bills, blueprints and road maps had been outlined, to boost local and foreign direct investment, as the country sought to become a high-tech nation by 2030. Billions of dollars had already been invested in digital technology by 28 foreign companies. Malaysia had launched a national vaccine development road map and national genome and vaccine institute to safeguard biological and health security in the country and region, and stressed the urgent need to bridge the vaccine divide, in order to recover better.

36. The global community needed to collectively address common challenges and take affirmative science and evidence-based actions to achieve sustainable development. In that connection, Malaysia welcomed greater cooperation and partnerships on science, technology and innovation to build back better and greener, and to realize the Sustainable Development Goals.

37. **Ms. Bayramli-Hamidova** (Azerbaijan) said that while the significant recent acceleration in digital transformation was commendable, the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed the global digital divide. Unequal access to digital technology would magnify divides in access to other development resources and the current momentum needed to be maximized, to design and promote a more equal, connected and comprehensive digital transformation that would leave no one behind.

38. The ICT sector was one of four targeted for economic diversification in Azerbaijan, the second most profitable and the second largest recipient of foreign direct investment, after the oil and gas industry. The country's vision for a creative and modern society was at the centre of its national priorities for socioeconomic development in the lead-up to 2030, and that vision could only be achieved through digital transformation and continued investment in broadband infrastructure. Broadband projects were also being implemented in the

liberated territories of Azerbaijan, where the systemic architecture would be designed to rely on modern technologies.

39. Given its geographic position, Azerbaijan was becoming a transit country between Asia and Europe, and had strategically committed to adopt policies designed to transform the South Caucasus into a regional digital hub. Based on inter-State agreements with partner countries, the trans-Caspian fibre-optic cable project aimed to create a new digital telecommunications corridor, via Azerbaijan, and develop an information technology and digital ecosystem in the country and region. In partnership with the World Economic Forum, a Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution had been launched in Azerbaijan, to contribute to the rapid application of advanced technologies and the development of the digital economy, and further improve research and development. Azerbaijan had been re-elected to the Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and looked forward to promoting and strengthening multilateral cooperation and driving innovations in ICTs.

40. The pandemic had tested existing migration governance mechanisms and Azerbaijan believed that the Global Compact for Migration was an effective instrument to regulate the various aspects of global human mobility, and would spare no effort for its successful implementation. Her delegation reiterated the idea stated in the Secretary-General's report that overcoming the economic impacts of the pandemic required enhanced cooperation on the relevant issues. Azerbaijan remained committed to cooperating with its partners to implement the 2030 Agenda and build people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented societies.

41. **Mr. Norbu** (Bhutan) said that given the power of science, technology and innovation to combat multidimensional vulnerabilities and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, Bhutan welcomed and commended initiatives to globally foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation, which focused on the hardest-to-connect communities in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. His country was currently implementing major transformational initiatives to strengthen public service delivery and public policy, with ICTs and digital technologies playing a central role of catalyst and enabler, and a dedicated technology agency had been established to drive digital transformation. As it prepared to graduate from least developed country status, those reforms

would strengthen efforts to ensure a smooth, sustainable and irreversible graduation.

42. Bhutan had made significant progress in recent decades, following the introduction of televisions and mobile phones. Mobile subscriptions and the number of people using the Internet had increased substantially, the national ICT road map had been revised and various policy instruments had been introduced to guide ICT development, resulting in Bhutan becoming one of only two least developed countries to have achieved universal broadband connectivity. ICTs had been integrated into public sectors, such as health and education, and technology was being used to drive climate adaptation and mitigation action and enhance disaster preparedness and response measures, which was critical, given the country's vulnerability to earthquakes, glacial lake outburst floods and other disasters.

43. Despite its efforts to optimize and leverage the use of technology to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, Bhutan continued to face challenges such as: the high cost and difficulty of establishing infrastructure and delivering services; increasing gaps in digital literacy and skills with each technological advancement; and the need to minimize vulnerability to cybersecurity threats as technology uptake increased. Such challenges were faced by almost all developing countries and underscored the reality that unequal access to knowledge and technology would create greater disparities in education opportunities and wealth. Bhutan therefore echoed the call of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries for adequate and predictable financing and technological and capacity support for developing countries, especially the most vulnerable among them. His delegation looked forward to engaging constructively with all stakeholders to support the creation of an enabling environment where all communities could adapt to and seize the opportunities presented by scientific and technological developments.

44. **Mr. Mezang Akamba** (Cameroon) said that Cameroon had taken note of the Secretary-General's reports highlighting the spread of misinformation and fake news, as well as issues relating to privacy and data protection. His delegation had also noted with concern the analysis conducted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which underscored the risk of aggravating the existing digital divide into a data divide. It was concerned that data traffic and the use of digital devices increased energy consumption, since the ICT ecosystem increasingly accounted for an important percentage of global carbon emissions and global pollution. Cameroon was calling

for timely recommendations specific to the issue of pollution and the promotion of multi-stakeholder international cooperation that maximized the development potential of ICTs, with the eco-sustainable use of technologies and digital devices.

45. Cameroon was aware that ICTs and artificial intelligence were at the heart of the fourth industrial revolution and was determined to take full advantage of ICTs and technological innovations to increase productivity and growth for sustainable development. To that end, a national agency for ICTs had been created in 2002, and was mandated to design and implement an ICT policy to promote and control Government action in the field of ICTs, so as to regulate electronic security activities in collaboration with the telecommunications regulatory authority. Cameroon had a fair comprehensive regulatory framework relating to cybercrime and cybersecurity, electronic communications and commerce, which was particularly favourable to technological development, the emergence of new digital markets, competition and the promotion of public-private partnerships. His Government's policy for the development of the ICT sector aimed to integrate that sector into the daily activities of institutions and individuals.

46. Cameroon intended to continue reaping the benefits of the implementation of its national digital strategy in 2020, with a view to strengthening the performance of the national economy, businesses and administrations. It subscribed resolutely to sustainable development based on science and technology, and had set up a national committee for the development of technologies. His Government had implemented solar power centres in rural areas and provided laptop computers to all students enrolled in higher education institutions. The use of electronic payment options and mobile phones had increased exponentially, which would significantly facilitate financial inclusion and strengthen the fight against poverty.

47. **Mr. Al Saad** (Bahrain) said that his country had received a "very high" classification in the United Nations E-Government Survey for 2020. It was ranked first in the Arab region in the ICT Index published by ITU and was the first member of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf to adopt cloud computing for government business. Bahrain had been instrumental in establishing the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education. As part of its commitment to South-South cooperation, the Kingdom had hosted a number of e-government workshops and conferences.

Bahrain also worked to achieve the ICT-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals as a member of ITU. It had launched the National Enterprise Architecture project to create a framework to coordinate the use of ICT across its government ministries and agencies. Its Government continued to make use of Amazon Web Services cloud computing systems, and had adopted a financial services sector strategy for the 2022–2026 period that included a financial technology component.

48. **Mr. Amadou** (Togo) said that technological progress was the main source of economic growth and, as such, Togo planned to take advantage of ICTs to make the digital economy into an important feature of its economic transformation. To that end his Government had adopted a digital transformation strategy as part of its 2022–2025 road map, with the objective of modernizing Togo and ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth. A national digital agency had been established to coordinate the Government's digital projects, the country's first ever data storage centre had been opened to safeguard sensitive data, and a high-speed underwater cable had been installed, with the potential to lower Internet access costs, create thousands of jobs and improve the country's economic performance. An appropriate legal and regulatory framework had also been established, to facilitate Togo's ambition to be West Africa's leading logistic and service hub.

49. The use of ICTs came with certain risks and cybersecurity was a major issue. Togo had therefore collaborated with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to host the continent's first cybersecurity summit in May 2022, which had ended with the adoption of a declaration on cybersecurity and the fight against cybercrime. Togo had signed a memorandum of understanding with ECA for the creation of a Lomé-based African cybersecurity centre, which would serve as a regional cybersecurity information hub. It had established a legal and regulatory framework to tackle the issue of cybersecurity, set up regulatory bodies and was one of the few countries to have ratified the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.

50. To better maximize the use of ICTs and promote environmental conservation, his Government had updated its digital public service portal, allowing for administrative services and procedures to be accessed from a single interface. Togo acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the urgent need to place ICTs at the forefront of development policies and was looking forward to the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations in that regard.

51. **Ms. Al Nabhani** (Oman) said that ICT had a direct impact on innovation, skills development and job creation. Her country had launched a national digital society strategy to set up infrastructure to transform government services, the business sector, education, health and employment. It had put forward policies and regulations to ensure the safety of electronic transactions, increase their use and attract investment in the relevant technologies. The Sultanate had ranked third among Arab States and in the Gulf Cooperation Council in ICT, and had received "very high" ratings in the United Nations E-Government Survey for 2020 for government services, ICT infrastructure, human capital and electronic participation.

52. **Archbishop Caccia** (Observer for the Holy See) said that while globalization had brought about positive developments in different areas, those gains had not always been evenly distributed within and among countries. Despite the significant opportunities it presented, globalization had, in many cases, exacerbated exclusion, isolation and discrimination, particularly for migrants. International and regional migration was one of the most prominent dimensions of globalization, yet, millions of irregular migrants could not enjoy its positive impacts and instead experienced different forms of violence, abuse and exploitation, before arriving, if at all, to their final destinations.

53. Every year, thousands of migrants risked being taken advantage of by smugglers or abandoned at sea and, to combat that illegal activity and prevent the loss of lives, States needed to adopt a more coherent and proactive approach in their coordination of search and rescue operations and in their disembarkation of migrants in safe places. More should be done to increase legal pathways for migration, invest in sustainable development and promote respect for fundamental human rights, particularly in countries of origin, so that migration would remain safe and voluntary.

54. Thousands of migrants disappeared every year on precarious journeys through different difficult situations, in which they sometimes required international protection. Upon or after their arrival in countries of destination, they sometimes experienced violence, racism, xenophobia or abuse and, too often, they disappeared before arrival and were automatically assumed dead and quickly forgotten. States and the relevant organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), needed to continue addressing that tragedy, by providing families with information about the final whereabouts of their loved ones. Many migrants, especially those who were victims of trafficking and smuggling, were unable or unwilling

to register for proof of legal identity or documentation, and were therefore unable to access essential services like healthcare, education, housing and employment.

55. Such scenarios had been labelled by Pope Francis as the “globalization of indifference”, and, instead of being grounded in solidarity and respect for human dignity and the pursuit of the common good, they promoted a sense of proximity without fraternity. In that regard, the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration and the recent negotiation of the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum were concrete tools that could help the international community to go from indifference and inaction to unity and solidarity.

56. **Ms. Aultman** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that migration was increasing and people were moving for different reasons, with the most vulnerable often fleeing a combination of factors, to later find themselves denied the humanitarian assistance and protection they needed. The 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Migration and the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum all reaffirmed the importance of recognizing and promoting migrants’ agency, empowerment and contributions to sustainable development, and the need to protect their safety, dignity and human rights.

57. IFRC worked alongside National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to address the humanitarian needs of migrants and improve their lives, by providing them with food, water, health interventions, shelter and information. Staff members and volunteers helped to reduce misconceptions and misunderstandings, address barriers of exclusion and discrimination, provide access to employment and essential services, and integrate migrants into societies. Finding a job and income, and building a sustainable livelihood were fundamental to well-being, integration and meaningful participation in societies. Evidence showed that such efforts were also beneficial for host communities and broader societies, and supported long-term development goals. In Europe, IFRC had collaborated with National Societies to provide individual guidance, vocational training, skills workshops, access to housing, school and health services, language classes, legal counselling, and mental health and psychosocial support.

58. IFRC urged Member States, the United Nations system and humanitarian organizations to renew their commitment to supporting the safety, dignity and well-being of migrants and prioritize the most vulnerable. It called on Member States to save lives and protect migrants’ dignity by placing humanity at the centre of

decisions, reducing vulnerabilities and ensuring unconditional access for humanitarian organizations. Migrants needed to be included in national registration systems and given access to essential services. The drivers of migration, many of which were linked to the climate crisis, needed to be addressed through measures aimed at averting, minimizing and addressing disaster and climate-related displacement. The support provided to migrants would bring the international community closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

59. **Ms. Jallow** (Observer for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the need for universal and meaningful Internet connectivity to support livelihoods, employment, health and well-being and enable education and social participation. One-third of humanity – mainly in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, and rural and remote areas – remained unconnected and excluded from information and opportunities. Typically, the latter were society’s most vulnerable people, the poor, minorities, displaced persons, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous and marginalized groups, and women and children.

60. Inequalities would persist until all persons had access to the digital economy, since leaving no one behind had become synonymous with leaving no one offline. New ways of overcoming connectivity barriers needed to be found and affordable access to technology needed to be scaled up to empower people with digital skills. That type of change required a holistic inclusive approach, to mobilize resources and monitor collective progress.

61. In keeping with its mandate to harmonize the use of radio-frequency spectrum, coordinate standardization and drive equitable digital development, ITU fostered connectivity and cybersecurity, which made it a stakeholder not only in technologies and services, but also in sustainable digital development. It had embraced that evolving role, launched joint projects and strengthened its cooperation with other United Nations agencies. The Envoy of the Secretary-General on Technology had underscored the importance of consulting the “ITU family” on the global digital compact, to shape the digital commons for everyone’s current and future benefit.

62. Technologies could help put the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals back on track. For ITU, that would mean connecting everyone to the Internet by 2030. To that end, inclusive technical

standards had been examined, new partnerships had been launched and the Radio Regulations would be updated. Cooperation on radiocommunication, technology standardization and digital development had never been so critical and ITU looked forward to engaging with Member States to promote rapid, inclusive, sustainable and human-centred digital transformation.

63. **Mr. Liljert** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration) said that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) welcomed the Secretary-General's report on international migration and development ([A/77/236](#)), and appreciated the emphasis placed therein on the Global Compact for Migration. Migration and sustainable development were inextricably linked and the Sustainable Development Goals could not be met without harnessing the potential of migration and broad support from the United Nations system and Member States. IOM welcomed the report's extensive discussion on how migration had been integrated into the voluntary national reviews presented during the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and the progress made in the monitoring of migration-related Goals, indicators and targets by the United Nations system. His organization believed that the report would further advance multilateral efforts to support safe, orderly and regular migration and, in turn, accelerate sustainable development.

64. IOM, in its own capacity, and as coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, would continue to work with Member States, United Nations agencies and all other partners, including local and regional actors, as well as migrants themselves. It would continue to mobilize available tools and capacity-building mechanisms to advance the Secretary-General's call to Member States to integrate migration and migrants as a cross-cutting issue into their national development plans, and ensure that rights were respected. Human mobility could be brought about by climate change, in the form of disaster displacement, labour migration, or planned relocation. That phenomenon was increasing, given the situation in vulnerable countries. IOM looked forward to supporting all Member States and relevant stakeholders, to enable them to effectively report on the contribution made by migration and migrants to sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.