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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific****Eightieth session**

Agenda item 2

**Theme topic, “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”****Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on 26 April 2024****80/1. Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,*

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which States acknowledged that the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness had great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies, as did scientific and technological innovation across areas as diverse as medicine and energy, and agreed to significantly increase access to information and communications technology,

*Recalling also* General Assembly resolution 75/1 of 21 September 2020 on the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, in which the Assembly committed itself to improving digital cooperation and recognized that digital technologies had a potential to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*Welcoming* General Assembly resolution 78/265 of 21 March 2024, entitled “Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for sustainable development”, in which the Assembly resolved to bridge the artificial intelligence and other digital divides between and within countries and to promote safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems to accelerate progress towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*Recalling* its resolution 78/1 of 27 May 2022, entitled “Bangkok Declaration Commemorating the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: a Common Agenda to Advance Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific”, in which the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific committed themselves to improving digital cooperation,

*Recalling also* its resolution 79/10 of 19 May 2023, entitled “Promoting digital cooperation and inclusion through the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, 2022–2026”, in which the

Commission decided to convene a ministerial conference on digital inclusion and transformation to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and regional technology initiatives, including the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, in line with the provisions of the conference structure of the Commission, and welcomed the offer of the Government of Kazakhstan to host such a ministerial conference in 2024,

*Recognizing* the potential of innovative digital technologies and solutions to advance sustainable development, foster inclusive growth, reduce poverty and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while also recognizing the negative impacts of such technologies and solutions, including the perpetuation of divides within and between countries, and the need to mitigate them,

*Stressing* the need to close all digital divides, which have been aggravated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and to promote digital inclusion by strengthening safe, secure and trustworthy digital systems and practices, taking into account national and regional contexts, and by addressing the challenges associated with secure access, affordability, digital literacy, digital skills and awareness of digital risks that could hinder progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the pledge to leave no one behind,

*Noting* that the digital economy can be an important and growing part of the global economy and that connectivity can be a useful enabler of economic growth,

*Affirming* that there are different approaches and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances, legal frameworks, policies and priorities, for augmenting the scale and positive impact of digital innovations so that development outcomes can benefit all people, in particular those in developing countries, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States,

1. *Encourages* all its members and associate members to strengthen regional and multi-stakeholder cooperation and to work together closely for the promotion of research and development in digital technologies and the fostering of human development and a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship with a view to expediting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in accordance with their national laws and priorities, by:

(a) Promoting dialogue and technical cooperation on digital innovations with a view to advancing sustainable development, including by unlocking value creation through digital economy initiatives in Asia and the Pacific, in an efficient, affordable, inclusive, secure and accessible manner, particularly for the most vulnerable, while also recognizing the major impediments that developing countries face in engaging with and gaining access to new technologies, such as the lack of an appropriate enabling environment, sufficient resources, infrastructure, education and literacy, capacity, investment and connectivity;

(b) Empowering individuals by fostering their competencies, capabilities and skills to use digital technologies;

(c) Promoting enabling policy and regulatory environments to facilitate the development, implementation and scaling up of digital innovations that accelerate and enable progress towards the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals;

2. *Recognizes* the need for context-driven approaches in developing and implementing digital solutions;

3. *Encourages* members and associate members to work towards closing digital divides and to promote digital inclusion by addressing the challenges associated with secure access, affordability, digital literacy and digital skills and by ensuring that the benefits of new technologies are available to all, taking into account all forms of digital divides – both between and within countries and including rural-urban, generational, income, education and gender divides – and the needs of those who are in vulnerable situations, in order to ensure safe, equitable and meaningful digital access for all, and also encourages members and associate members, in line with their national policies and priorities, to cooperate with the United Nations development system and with multi-stakeholders, within their respective roles and responsibilities, in order to promote and improve digital inclusion;

4. *Notes with deep concern* the existing disparities between developed and developing countries in terms of conditions, possibilities and capacities to produce new scientific and technological knowledge;

5. *Recognizes* that science, technology and innovation cooperation and collaboration with, as well as foreign direct investment in and trade with and among, developing countries, as well as international support, are fundamental to enhancing developing countries' ability to benefit from technological advances and to produce, nurture, access, comprehend, select, adapt and use science, technology and innovation knowledge;

6. *Emphasizes* the need to encourage the promotion of North-South cooperation projects and programmes to improve developing countries' access to more and better resources for the implementation of technical and scientific initiatives and to continue working on the development of science and technology in developing countries by strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation, while recalling that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation;

7. *Expresses* its appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan for offering to host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation and encourages all members and associate members to participate at the senior level to strengthen regional digital cooperation with the aim of promoting digital inclusion and sustainable development in alignment with the mandate of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in coordination with other relevant United Nations entities on digital and cyber activities, taking into account the potential duplication of effort within the multilateral system;

8. *Notes with appreciation* the initiative of the Government of Kazakhstan on establishing a digital solutions centre for sustainable development to provide practical digital solutions in Central Asia and beyond;

9. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To facilitate regional cooperation among members and associate members with a view to fostering digital innovation for sustainable development and promoting inclusive digital economies and societies by making full use of the potential of United Nations agencies and other organizations with relevant mandates and expertise, as well as multi-stakeholders, within their respective roles and responsibilities, and regional and subregional platforms, including, inter alia, the Asia-Pacific

Information Superhighway initiative, as appropriate and within existing resources, in order to promote digital innovations and mitigate digital risks for accelerated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as necessary, taking into account the need to eliminate duplication of effort;

(b) To strengthen support to members and associate members, upon request and within existing resources, in accordance with their needs and national priorities, with a view to identifying, developing and implementing enabling policy and regulatory environments for promoting scalable and integrated digital solutions that accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, 2022–2026;

(c) To provide technical assistance, policy analysis and capacity-building support, within existing resources, in accordance with countries' needs and priorities, while also enhancing awareness creation and knowledge-sharing among members and associate members on promoting digital innovation, on addressing and enhancing digital trust, security and inclusion, on leveraging emerging digital opportunities and on mitigating digital risks and challenges for sustainable development, as appropriate, within the scope of the mandate of the Commission;

(d) To issue a biennial publication for policymakers, within existing resources and in collaboration with other relevant agencies and stakeholders, as appropriate, on trends, challenges and opportunities related to promoting digital innovations for sustainable development and to submit the key findings contained therein to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation for its consideration;

(e) To report to the Commission at its eighty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*9th plenary meeting  
26 April 2024*