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**High-level roundtable on "The role of STI in empowering people and in
ensuring inclusiveness and equality"**

Statement submitted by

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"The role of STI in empowering people and in ensuring inclusiveness and equality"

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Good Afternoon

In recent years, empowering people and accomplishing equality in designing and implementing STI policies have become a huge concern for governments and policy makers. For this concern, Islamic republic of Iran has emphasized on **three important policy making aspects:**

- The first aspect is related to STI infrastructure inclusiveness and equality both from gender perspectives and geographical perspectives. In Iran's higher education system, more than four million students are currently studying at universities. From whom, about fifty percent are females. This can be regarded as a fair example of gender equality. Apart from providing equal opportunities to both sexes, the government tries its best to establish universities, science parks and other STI infrastructures across the country and in all provinces. Although, the quality of these colleges are not the same, the development in Iran will not be limited to the capital and big cities. In this sense, Iran also provides some advantages to talent people from deprived areas to be eligible for entrance to the main universities.
  Also, inclusiveness in ICT infrastructure development is an important accelerator for sustainable development. In this sense, the government invests a lot to provide ICT services to all under paid citizens. Now, Broadband Internet services is available in almost all rural areas in Iran.

Second aspect is social innovation. In this regard, Iran adopts coherent STI strategies for achieving social benefits and equality goals plus implementing STI policy frameworks and instruments for promoting social innovation. Furthermore, they are to empower undermined citizens and inclusiveness in competitive advantages for stakeholders in particular rural and under developed regions.

These strategies have been implemented by vibrant domestic entrepreneurship ecosystems with a focal role of Start-ups.

In Iran, startups are working to fulfill the needs of the disabled, the poor, women and children, residents of deprived areas, addicts, the homeless and last but not the least, prisoners. They deploy various technologies and platforms to (partly) resolve the needs of such people.

The third important aspect of STI policies for inclusiveness and sustainable development is the mission oriented STI policy for SDGs. In this regard, Iranian new technology based firms have become engaged in helping the society to achieve inclusiveness specially in areas such as water, sanitation hygiene and health. In this regardes, new technologies like nano and bio tech are very important.

Purification of wastewater using nano technologies is very important in Iran due to the shortage of the water in many areas.

In biopharmaceutical production, we have great capabilities as it was mentioned in Iran STIP review by UNCTAD in 2015. A domestic STI program in this field could enable Iran to be independent in nearly all important vaccines and medicines for humans as well as animals. The domestic capability in producing medicine has dramatically reduced the cost of healthcare in Iran and has enabled us to provide the health service to almost all citizens with an eye towards inclusiveness and equality. Apart from the cost advantage of the indigenous capability in

pharmaceutical sector, it allows us to fight with local diseases and be fast response to local conditions.

We are ready to share these technologies with other developing countries to provide sustainable water supply in remote areas and improve the health situation of their people at fairly lower costs.