**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-second session**
Geneva, 13-17 May 2019

**Group discussion on priority theme 1: The impact of rapid technological
change on the sustainable development
Group 1: National strategies on artificial intelligence**

Summary

Wednesday, 15 May 2019

Dear Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Yesterday we convened a group discussion on priority theme 1: "The impact of rapid technological change on sustainable development." Group 1 focused its discussions on "National strategies on artificial intelligence."

Our breakout group explored two questions.

The first question posed was "Does your country have a national policy or strategy on AI or a related theme?" In the context of this question, we asked how the national policy is linked to the SDGs and what are best practices and lessons learned in devising and implementing such a strategy?

There were many examples of countries who had recently or are currently developing national policies and strategies on AI.

Some countries have devised policies and made significant financial investments in AI across the value chain, including R&D, technology development, and industry applications through a bottom-up and top-down approach.

Many countries recognized the potential of AI as a driver for sustainable development and with application to all 17 SDGs. Examples included the importance of AI for smart manufacturing and Industry 4.0, employment generation, sustainable energy, mobility and transport, health, remote sensing and Earth Observation, the Blue Economy, environmental sustainability, and biodiversity.

Although countries differ in their approaches to national policies, we observed a few lessons learned from the variety of policy experiences:

- Some countries are using the AI policy development exercise to engage in technology foresight and assessment exercises to understand the possible implication of AI – among other frontier technologies – on the SDGs and their own nationally defined development agenda.
- Several countries are engaging in a broad-based, participatory dialogue involving a range of stakeholders to help set priorities for their sectors. Governments are facilitating dialogue across sectors in their respective economies – including academia, research institutions, private sector, government, and civil society.

- Some countries have made normative concerns a key part of their strategies, with a focus on easing potential labor market disruptions due to automation, addressing data-related concerns of privacy and security, investigating issues involving algorithmic bias and discrimination, and promoting diversity and inclusion in AI-related education, research, and industry.

The second question posed was "How can the international community – including the United Nations and the CSTD – engage in discussions about the normative frameworks guiding the use of AI?"

Some countries are developing their national AI strategies in consultation with regional bodies to establish common areas of policy concern and coordination.

It was also mentioned that AI should continue to be discussed in influential forums like the CSTD with an understanding of how AI impacts national, regional and global strategies.

The international community could consider how developments in different countries have facilitated dialogue on this issue.

Finally, participants noted that global dialogues on the impact of rapid technological change should be multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral, and multidisciplinary.

Thanks for your time and attention in delivering a summary to the Commission.