Delegation from The Republic of India
Position Paper for the General Assembly

The issues before the General Assembly are: Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for Sustainable Economic and Financial Development and Disaster Risk Reduction. The Republic of India reaffirms its commitment to achieve sustainable development and cooperation within the international community and to support the improvement of systems for crisis and disaster management.

I.   Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for Sustainable Economic and Financial Development

The Republic of India is alarmed at the accelerated increase of digital divide between developing and developed countries amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic following several reports on the issue. In times of rapid digitization and globalization of the economy, Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) have become a key component of economic and financial development for all nations as global connectivity is the defining trait of this century. Still, four out of five people in this world cannot yet profit from economic benefits of the internet. And COVID-19 is now worsening this already blatant state of affairs. Even in nations with significant research and know-how in ICTs, such as India, digitization of work depends more on quantity – not quality because participation in the digital world is only possible through the use of ICTs. Their economic usage creates economic opportunities and their role in economic and financial development has never been more relevant. Still, with a lack of ICTs, developing nations will fall behind even further. Therefore, the Republic of India calls for the developed nations of this world to not use the disruption caused by COVID-19 to make excuses to not find solutions to decelerate this trend. The international community must uphold its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015 and react quickly and cohesively to achieve SDG 9: Investing in ICT access and quality education to promote lasting peace.

The Addis Abeba Action Agenda (AAAA) (2015) emphasizes the necessity to invest in economic resources that promote capacity building and economic growth and furthermore encourages the creation of policies and frameworks that promote investments in ICTs and strengthens public-private partnerships (PPPs). On the UN-funded World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) of 2005, the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda were enacted which address internet governance, policy recommendations, and mechanisms for financing to encourage the implementation of ICT resources for sustainable development. The WSIS acknowledges General Assembly (GA) resolution 70/125 (2015) that highlights the crosscutting contributions of ICTs to development and has most recently dealt with the theme of "ICTs for Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Societies and Economies (WSIS Action Lines for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals)" on its 2021 forum. However, as the UN Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Financing for Development has warned in its 2018 report of the increase of the digital divide between developed and developing countries and warned again in its 2020 report of COVID-19 being likely to deteriorate this particular trend. In its Resolution 76/189 (2021) on "Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development", the GA recognized the following countering measures: making use of capacity-building from the entire UN system, the expertise of forums for knowledge exchange, and keeping up investments in digital infrastructure with the help of governmental and civil stakeholders. While India reaffirms its commitment to all the mentioned frameworks and measures, these ideas should only be regarded as a fundamental consensus that do not resolve these issues on their own.

The Republic of India, as previously stated, calls for action of the international community to react to the increasing digital divide and to support developing nations in their economic and financial development despite all national challenges amid the COVID-19 pandemic. SDGs must remain a key priority that cannot be put on hold. In so far, India proposes to include private actors into this process more than before, e.g., non-governmental organizations and private businesses. The pandemic showed the true potential of digitization once embraced – in times of crisis or not. Previously, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have already taken part in assistance to Member States in providing best practices and strengthening the role of ICTs. Examples include the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) of the World Wide Web Foundation, as well as many others. The inclusion of private actors relieves the public sector and ensures a better induction of profitable and modern technology in the process and encourages

innovation in regard to bolstering the usage of ICTs for economic and financial development. PPPs are a good method of incorporating such businesses in the process.

II.   Disaster Risk Reduction

Major disasters struck India and the whole world in 2021. COVID-19 claimed the lives of more than 300,000 Indians last year, though the numbers are potentially a lot higher. 2021's North Indian Ocean cyclone season was particularly cruel with Cyclone Tauktae displacing over 2,000,000 people alone. India recognizes climate change leading to increasingly frequent and intense disasters which are, as also demonstrated in the Interconnected Disaster Risks Report 2020/21, increasingly complex, systemic, and mutually reinforcing and affect all of the international community. Therefore, India calls for improvements in disaster resilience through social protection systems that can protect livelihoods during disasters as well as Disaster Risk Reduction. In this regard, India sees the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to, as the US' president Joe Biden put it, "build back better" by addressing the underlying roots of disaster risks.

The Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World was the first global framework document on Disaster Risk Reduction and was adopted in 1994. It spearheaded the political and strategic concept of Disaster Risk Reduction and was followed up with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 in 2005, also known as the Hyogo Framework, as well as the current Sendai Framework. It was adopted in 2015 at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and included biological hazards for the first time. The Sendai Framework is the current basis for the topic of Disaster Risk Reduction and its full implementation was urged in GA resolution 76/204 (2021). Additionally, Disaster Risk Reduction has found representation in the SDGs in goal number 1, 11, and 13. In 2016, the Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 have been adopted and added to the Sendai Framework. In the most recent GA resolutions on Disaster Risk Reduction, the most pressing issues of this time are the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of climate change while other potential risk areas are becoming more and more interdependent. The Secretary-General pointed out in his report to the GA 76/240 (2021) that health aspects must be further integrated into the Sendai Framework and that the Bangkok Principles must be implemented more thoroughly. Also, socio-economic aspects were called for, especially in regard to the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. In regard to climate change, the GA resolution 76/204 (2021) on Disaster Risk Reduction called for land and water management strategies to counter the threat of drought and flood and ensure the achievement of water-related SDGs.

The Republic of India, as previously stated, calls for action of the international community to elaborate systems of Disaster Risk Reduction to increase the international community's capabilities to react as quickly and as efficiently as possible. On the occasion of the Seventh Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2022) this year in Bali, all stakeholders should use the opportunity to sound out interests and ideas for the revision of the Sendai Framework in 2023 which will be held at the "highest possible level" according to GA resolution 76/204 (2021), a step that, given the high priority of the issue, India strongly welcomes. In regard to innovating solutions to the issues, India suggests designing technological and infrastructure-based approaches to improve crisis resilience. This does not only include investing into infrastructure capable of withstanding extreme weather but also improvements of medical systems, water supply, or early warning systems. The goal is to decrease costs and complexity of reacting to a disaster in order to continuously build resilience. This approach is regionally applicable according to local needs and does not require a grand strategy. Instead, a bottom-up and demand-based approach should find regional solutions to regional issues. The scope of funding and organization should depend on projects in the hands of the national government, adhering to UN requirements and being subject of UN monitoring processes.