Delegation from the Russian Federation

Position Paper for the General Assembly

The topics before the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) Second Committee are I. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for Sustainable Economic and Financial Development and II. Disaster Risk Reduction. The Russian Federation recognizes the scale and importance of both topics and looks forward to tackling these challenges in cooperation with all Member States (MS).

I. ICTs for Sustainable Economic and Financial Development

International cooperation regarding ICTs is relevant, as it allows companies to sell goods and services online. It is especially important, in times of a pandemic with contact reductions. In April 2020, during the Covid-19 crisis, half of the world's population was constrained by some kind of lockdown. This made it impossible for shops to sell their products physically, companies with a good technology structure were able to use the ICTs for online shopping. Global online sales grew by 63% in the third quartile of 2020. Considering that Africa has less than 40% overall connectedness and 4.3 billion people remain offline, it is difficult for companies to act on the global stage. This immense growth of online sales and the low connectedness shows the relevance of ICTs for the whole world as it enables economic growth.

ICTs introduce new cross-cutting solutions and make sustainable development possible. Access to the digital world is a key factor for global connectedness and the exchange of information, services, and data on a global scale. With the *GA resolution 70/125 (2015)* attaining sustainable funding for ICTs, would help to bridge the digital divide. By addressing gaps in infrastructure, ICTs are strongly connected to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the technology increasing the pace towards achieving the SDGs. The international community at the World Summits on Information Society provides a global alignment for the generation of access, use and sharing of knowledge through ICTs to achieve universal benefit. ICTs enable Open Educational Resources which permit no-cost access to learning, research, and information. National and Regional Internet Governance Forums recognize the importance of ICTs and strengthen partnerships between states to ensure equitable opportunities of the states. The framework "Connect 2030 Agenda for Global Telecommunication/ICT Development" declares the necessity of affordable and accessible ICTs to promote sustainable development.

The Russian Federation has one of the world's largest Information Technology (IT) markets. We expect 124 million internet users in Russia by 2025, which represent 86% of the total population. This is possible due to our sustainable and secure infrastructure including 5G communication standards. Having this 5G connection allows fast internet and makes online shopping easy for companies and customers. Only having 14% of the population without internet access shows that Russia addresses the gap in infrastructure effectively. Which is in line with the fulfillment of the SDGs. Additionally, the Russian Federation approved a *National Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) 2030 (2019)*. We are an active part of the Council of Europe Ad Hoc Committee on AI which develops the first regulations in this field and establishes recommendations for ethics of the use of AI technologies.

Acknowledging the rapid technological change and the financial barrier, the Russian Federation seeks for affordable and accessible ICTs for all MS and to avoid a widening of the existing economic and social gaps due to the fast development of IT. Observing the alarming amount of e-waste we want to find a solution to reuse devices and improve digital inclusion. The Russian Federation contemplates the possibility to store used technology in one place of the country and then send it to MS with a low connectedness. This project "Revive" would make it possible for all MS to increase the accessibility to ICTs. Keeping in mind that the devices do not work, additional information needs to be provided to the MS to enable people to fix the technology and reuse it. Having the International Telecommunication Union sharing this kind of information and offering yearly training in cooperation with technology firms. Those trainings should address different fields of technology every year and should therefore be scheduled in the interest of the company offering the training. Following this approach will increase the number of employees in all MS, that are able to fix the technology, it supports their education, and improves the general ICTs availability. The Russian Federation hopes to convince all MS to agree to the project "Revive", as it is in line with many SDGs and an overall support of the UN would have a sustainable impact to the whole world. This effective approach supports SDG-4 by increasing quality education and SDG-8 as more educated employees raise economic growth. The infrastructure is supported by better technology, this is in line with SDG-9, and by reusing the devices it supports SDG-12.

II. Disaster Risk Reduction

More than 1.5 billion were affected globally by disasters over the past 10 years. Having a look at the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System shows the relevance of the topic of disaster risk reduction. There are earthquakes, tropical cyclones, floods, volcanoes, droughts, and forest fires published. These disasters affect many people and while less persons are killed compared to disasters of the years around 1930, many more persons are affected by them. In 1920 the number of deaths from disasters was higher than 500,000, while in 2010 this number was around 50,000. But the number of total people affected rose from less than 10 million to about 175 million. These statistics show that the way of dealing with disasters has improved, but the goal should be to reduce the number of disasters at all. Keeping in mind that those numbers only show natural disasters, there are additional disasters like the pandemic, which we need to consider for a comprehensive view of the topic.

Following the goal to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk, the UN implemented the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (Sendai Framework) in 2015. This Framework identifies climate change as a key factor of disaster risks and focuses on the problem of states who are trapped in an endless cycle of trying to recover from disasters while having to respond to new, emerging crises. The United Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDDR) mentions that it is necessary to invest into risk reduction, as US$1 investment into prevention can save US$15 for recovery. In the *GA resolution 61/198 (2006),* the UN established a new platform to monitor the implementation of the Sendai Framework and to review the progress on disaster risk reduction. Key for achieving sustainable development are the international Plans of Action and the national and local risk reduction plans, which identify technical and financial capacities and how they can be allocated. Problematic is that those national and local disaster risk reduction strategies should be created by 2020, but only 91 nations handed in strategies by May 2019. Out of those, only 6 national plans were in full compliance with the Sendai Framework.

Nationally, the Russian Federation is implementing the Sendai Framework, as Vladimir Puchkov, Minister of Emergency Situations from 2012 to 2018, considers the human losses and economic damage as not acceptable, he demands to use all resources and capacities to reduce disaster risk. The priority task of the state is the protection of people and territories; therefore, the investment plans are ensured to be high risk-sensitive and sustainable. The UNDDR mentions floods, wildfires, and extreme temperatures as the most problematic disasters for Russia. It is necessary to monitor those disasters and risks to understand the threats which Russia faces. Therefore, we participate in the UN database on disaster damage to ensure an effective implementation of the Sendai Framework. The Russian Federation wants to take an all-of-society approach including forecast, rescue, protection, and recovery. Here the scientific sector plays an important role as observation and control are a relevant factor for a sustainable implementation.

Therefore, we support the UN Disaster loss database, where all MS incorporate the disasters, they faced in the past and how they tackled them, so that other states can learn from this information. Additionally, this database should include ways, which are currently used to forecast disasters. The access to effective forecast possibilities and its implementation should reduce the disasters in a country and therefore improve the worldwide situation. Having a reduced number of disasters would cut down the overall costs for recovery. Additionally, a system should be created which not only forecasts disasters, but also shows the expected amount of financial resources which are needed for the recovery from the upcoming crisis. This system would allow us to gather necessary resources in advance leading to rapid aid. Those resources could partially be provided by voluntary funds of inhabitants in a MS, partially by the world bank and partially by the UNDRR. The money of the UNDRR comes from voluntary contributions of MS to support the Disaster Risk Reduction worldwide. This approach should help MS to recover from disasters quickly, so that they are not struggling from the last crisis before the next risk occurs. Also, this system would show where investment is necessary to reduce possible recovery costs for the next disaster, which improves the overall situation as the MS can react proactively. The collaboration with the UNDRR and the UN disaster loss database supports the achievement of SDG-1 as preventing disasters reduces the need to recover from crises which then in turn reduces poverty. The forecast system which identifies necessary resources needed in the case of a disaster show relevant investments and makes the sustainable development of a country possible. This is in line with SDG-11. In the long run disasters can only be prevented if effective climate actions are implemented, which is in line with SDG-13. As this is such an important topic, the Russian Federation hopes to get support from all the other MS to implement an effective way to prevent disasters and to allow countries to recover quickly from occurring disasters. We are looking forward to fruitful discussions in the next session of the GA Second Committee.