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Status of Implementation of the Information and Communications Technology Strategy for the United Nations

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FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by

Ms. Atefeh Riazi,
Assistant Secretary-General, Chief Information Technology Officer,
Office of Information and Communications Technology
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Madam Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

Good morning. I am pleased to be here today to report on the status of the implementation of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy for the United Nations.

Since the General Assembly endorsed the strategy (A/69/517) at the beginning of 2015, the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) has made solid progress in its implementation, modernizing and transforming the ICT landscape throughout the Secretariat and, thereby, creating a stepping stone to a period of innovation.

Achievements during the first four years of the strategy's implementation include the following:

- OICT provided critical support, through global network harmonization, integration access, and production support for the deployment of Umoja.

- Enterprise Application Centres have worked to consolidate the number of legacy applications from 2,340 (as of 1 July 2014) to 988 in March 2018.

- Regional Technology Centres are harmonizing ICT services across regions, institutionalizing governance, ensuring compliance with global standards and policy, and implementing the strategy.

- Enterprise Data Centres are fully established and operational, enhancing the reliability of our data hosting capacity.

- The global "One United Nations" network connected 594 United Nations locations in UNHQ, Offices Away from Headquarters, Economic Commissions, Peacekeeping Missions and Special Political Missions.

- Enterprise systems and applications in the Secretariat are more secure.

The Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) of the former Department of Field Support has been consolidated into OICT, with the Chief Information Technology Officer having reporting lines to the Under Secretaries-General for Department of Operational Support and Department Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance.

This structural change marks a paradigm shift in the way ICT is implemented, broadening the capability and capacity of OICT and offering the opportunity to harmonize the efforts of the two entities more fully. For the Secretariat, the range and timeliness of services has increased, with the two largest ICT offices in the UN now able to chart a common strategic direction.

OICT is now better positioned to fully leverage field technology, geographic information capacity, information security, innovation and frontier technologies, and the management of information as a valued asset of the UN. Underpinned by a previous close collaborative approach between ICTD and OICT, the integration of the two offices has been effective and efficient.

Efforts are ongoing to strengthen information security, as risks continue to evolve and grow. In 2017, we blocked just under 1 million emails containing malicious code; in 2018, we stopped more than twice that volume. Similarly, the number of incidents grew by 10% between 2017 and 2018, even while information security resources remained largely static.

The Organization's main concern has been, and continues to be, protecting itself from information security threats. In today's world, there are two related concerns: the impact of information security threats on our ability to implement our mandates and the impact information security has on the world, and

Member States, where the digital divide results in a wider range of vulnerabilities. The creation of the Digital Blue Helmets—a team of highly trained and specialized analysts—has been critical in addressing the information security threats that while not directly targeting the United Nations, nonetheless have a significant impact on our fulfillment of our mandates and on Member States.

Efforts are underway on the digital agenda, innovative solutions and analytics, and building sustainable capacity of the Unite Service Desk, consolidating 131 service desks into one virtual hub.

The focus of the ICT strategy has evolved towards the use of technology and data in support of the work of the United Nations. The digital agenda leverages technology to address the decision of the General Assembly with respect to strengthening the Organization and facilitating the work of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, social and economic development and humanitarian affairs.

- To increase awareness of emerging technologies and innovation techniques, OICT hosts periodic "TechNovation Talks" for UN personnel as well as delegates from Member States.

- New technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Language Processing are employed by OICT, its United Nations Technology Innovation Lab supporting the sharing of these technologies.

- Unite Ideas is an open-source crowdsourcing platform that harnesses ideas and solutions from thousands of data scientists and coders all over the world.

- Many partnerships have been established with private and public-sector organizations, as well as academia and individuals in the public domain.

During the fourth year of implementation, efforts continued towards the accomplishment of global sourcing and global assets management, in collaboration with ICTD.

- The procurement process is currently being finalized for the ICT global system contract for the provision of fully managed services such as email, storage, satellite network management, service desk, task order services, and integrated workforce services.

- An application service global system contract is being established through three delivery models, consisting of integrated workforce services, a retainer agreement, and task orders.

The ICT strategy established a common vision for ICT delivery in the United Nations through modernization, transformation and innovation, founded on a framework of improved governance and an effective balance of central leadership and operational freedom. With the Secretary-General's report on management reforms of the United Nations (A/72/492), we are developing a strategy for the next five years to focus on the development of Secretariat-wide ICT in support of the UN and its mandates.

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates, I look forward to the discussion on this item.