Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We face challenging times. The pandemic is taking a toll on our economy as we are dependent on the tourism industry for our livelihood, an industry that will take many years to recover. Our efforts to find answers, depends on the reliance on science, the technological solutions and innovations that can help us track and contain the spread of COVID-19, keep providing fundamental education and health services, and enable businesses to continue operating, and in the processes, in many cases, reinvent themselves.

Excellencies,

Collaboration is necessary in harness technology to address major challenges such as COVID-19, and we would like to recommend that that the secretariat support the development of multi-stakeholder technology alliances to address such challenges.

The topic of this session fits very well with the mission of the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology that I represent, which is to ‘provide leadership and an enabling policy and regulatory environment for the development of digital government, digital economy and digital society; and advance science and research and development led inclusive, sustainable and resilient national development.’

In fact, inclusive sustainable development driven by digital transformation is very much a cornerstone of The Strategic Action Plan 2019 – 2023 of the Government of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. Designed around five key priority areas of Blue Economy, Caring State, Dignified Families, Jazeera Dhiriulhun (Island life), and Good Governance, the current strategic vision is about ensuring that all Maldivians live a dignified life.
Excellencies,

We, therefore, welcome the work that the secretariat has carried out over the past two years to promote technology and innovation that bring more inclusive outcomes, and we recommend that the secretariat continues to support member States in promoting inclusive science, technology and innovation policies through facilitating the sharing of best practices and learning, holding forums to facilitate regional collaboration; supports research that can inform more inclusive technology and innovation policies, including through research and policy networks; building policymaking capacities; analysing the inclusive dimension of science, technology and innovation policies; and making tools available for promoting and assessing inclusive technology and innovation policies.

Science, technology and innovation (STI) are critical for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we recommended that that the secretariat gives priority to STI. On behalf of my country, I would like to request ESCAP’s support in guiding us to effectively harness STI for sustainable development. ESCAP is well placed to guide our efforts on science, technology and innovation support green recovery by harnessing renewable energy to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels and the electricity cost burden. It is also well placed to guide the Maldives on how we might use science, technology and innovation to promote shared prosperity across our archipelago.

In conclusion, I would like to thank ESCAP for giving us this opportunity and for its engagement with Maldives. In particular I would like to highlight the work by APCICT and ITU in restarting and reinvigorating the digital transformation of the government and thank them for their continued support. We look forward to close partnership with ESCAP in ensuring that digital development is truly for and with everyone.

Thank you.