Thank you Mr Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Papua New Guinea is pleased to participate in the third session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology and Science, Technology and Innovation. This statement is made in regards to Agenda Item 5a: “Guidelines for inclusive technology and innovation policies for sustainable development”.

Currently, Papua New Guinea relies heavily on the agricultural, forestry and the mining sector. The country is highly dependent on imports as it has a tiny manufacturing industry. There is essentially no transformation industry in PNG.

The Government recognizes that Science, Technology and Innovation are important for inclusive, economic growth in its Medium-Term Development Plan 2018 -2022 (MTDP III). The Knowledge, Innovation, Technology and Enterprise (KITE) program was integrated in the MTDP III to lead and transform PNG into a smart nation. Research, Innovation and Enterprise are cornerstones of the country’s national strategy for a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy and society.

Public investment in research and innovation currently represents about 0.03% of GDP and the Government intends to increase this to 5% growth progressively as part of the overall translational strategy in its Vision 2050. Through the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP III), the Government will increase its investment in this sector with annual budget support for the KITE Program.

PNG has the opportunity to use science, technology and innovation in addressing important social and economic challenges. The science, technology and innovation policy, plan, national research agenda, and the knowledge, innovation, technology and entrepreneurship program (KITE) have been formulated to provide the roadmap for transformation of PNG into the digital era.

Challenges and Emerging Policy Gaps that require support from ESCAP

Though there is clear support to promote science, technology and innovation in the country, the actual work involved has not been progressing well. There is no collaboration and partnership between all the stakeholders to work together and push the agenda of KITE forward.

The state of research in the country continues to remain below expectation due to persistent lack of funding by government, with no annual appropriation to support research capacity and programs, in spite of good policy interventions in the Vision 2050 and MTDP’s. Furthermore, the lack of research governance, policy and legal basis are major hindrances.
Papua New Guinea recognises that global and regional economies are driven by science, technology and innovation heralded by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and is working towards this direction. Through ESCAP and regional cooperation we can all bridge the digital divide with inclusive technology and innovation policies.

Papua New Guinea will seek support from ESCAP to provide in-country consultations with the key STI stakeholders in understanding STI linkages to the Agenda 2030. More specifically, PNG may require ESCAP’s support in the following:

1. Technical inputs to support and facilitate amendments to the PNG Science and Technology Council Act to provide a basis for the governance and co-ordination of science, technology and innovation.

2. Technical support to finalise a Realignment Policy to co-ordinate all research agencies in Papua New Guinea.

3. Technical support to develop a policy for IP protection, patents & commercialization for traditional knowledge, technology start-ups, entrepreneurs and innovators.

4. Technical support in developing a policy for a Domestic Innovation System and other mechanisms to support Technology Start-Ups or SME’s.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Mr. Chairman, science, technology and innovation (STI) are critical for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it is recommended that the ESCAP secretariat support member States in developing their STI policies to effectively harness STI for sustainable development.

Papua New Guinea strongly support the Commission’s work on inclusive technology and innovation policies, and recommend that the ESCAP secretariat continues to support member States in developing inclusive technology and innovation policies, facilitating the sharing of best practices and learning in the region; conducting research on this agenda, and building policymaking capacities.

Recognizing entrepreneurs – particularly the youth and women – as an important source of innovation, it is recommended that the ESCAP secretariat continue to support member States to develop policy initiatives and capacities to engage the private sector to harness innovation for social and environmental as well as economic objectives. It is further recommended that the secretariat facilitate knowledge sharing between policymakers in the Asia-Pacific region on business innovation for sustainable development.

To conclude, Papua New Guinea will collaborate closely with other member States to progress inclusive technology and innovation policy development in the Asia-Pacific region.