*Please check against delivery*

****

**UN-OHRLLS**

**Statement**

**by**

**Rabab Fatima**

**Under-Secretary-General and High Representative**

**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States**

**at the**

**3rd Preparatory Committee for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)**

**Agenda Item: Science, technology, innovation and capacity building**

**14 February 2025**

**10.00am – 1.00pm**

**Excellencies,**

**I thank you for the opportunity to intervene on science, technology, innovation and capacity building.**

**The LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS all suffer acutely from connectivity challenges and stark digital divides.**

**Technological advances for sustainable development**

**Science, technology, and innovation play a transformative role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.**

**Investments in research, digital infrastructure, and renewable energy technologies are essential to driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth.**

**Strengthening partnerships for technology transfer and ensuring equitable access to emerging technologies will empower vulnerable economies to overcome development challenges.**

**Digital divides**

**The growing digital divide continues to hinder the participation of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS in the global economy. Bridging this gap requires investments in broadband connectivity, affordable internet access, and digital literacy programs.**

**Policymakers must prioritize inclusive digital policies that enable underserved communities to benefit from the digital economy and participate in global markets.**

**Digital technology for financial inclusion and financial health**

**Expanding access to digital financial services is key to fostering economic inclusion and resilience.**

**Mobile banking, digital payment systems, and fintech solutions offer opportunities for individuals and small businesses to access credit, insurance, and savings tools.**

**Promoting regulatory frameworks that encourage innovation while protecting consumers is vital for ensuring the stability and inclusiveness of digital financial services.**

**Excellencies,**

**By closing the digital divide, promoting sustainable technological advancements, and expanding financial inclusion through digital solutions, we can create a more equitable and prosperous future for all.**

**I thank you.**