**LDCs Intervention for Chapter on STI at FfD4 Prepcom 3**

**Distinguished Co-facilitators**

I have the honor to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The Group aligns itself with the statement of the G77 and China.

Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) are pivotal catalysts for economic growth and sustainable development.

However, many LDCs lack the necessary infrastructure, such as reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and research facilities, to support STI activities.

There is a shortage of skilled professionals and researchers in LDCs. Low levels of education and training in science and technology fields contribute to this gap.

We are disappointed to see the benefits of technological advancements remain disproportionately concentrated in a few counties, while developing countries including LDCs face significant challenges in mobilizing financing for critical infrastructure, technology, and human capital investments, as well as in ascending manufacturing and services value chains.

FfD4 is a unique opportunity to bridge the financing gap. We believe the zero draft outcome document outlines several crucial commitments for advancing STI and its development applications in LDCs which we support and should remain in the text.

We appreciate the commitment in paragraph 59 (a) to support development and implementation of national STI4SDG roadmaps that foster an enabling environment while incentivizing innovations aligned with sustainable development.

We are also happy to see the provision in paragraph 59 (e), of support and training on strategic STI, to build capacity,

We support the call in paragraph 59 (e) for the IFIs, international organizations, and development partners to enhance financing and capacity support to STI projects in developing countries.

The group appreciates paragraph 59 (g) which commits to ensure that resources are directed to countries and regions with high needs and impacts.

Likewise, we welcome the call in paragraph 59 (d) urging expedient operationalization of the Online University for LDCs to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.

We support paragraph 59 (h) to strengthen the capacity of the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the Technology Bank for LDCs with adequate resources so they can effectively fulfill their mandates.

Paragraph 60 (a) to support countries in their design of digital infrastructure financing models and impact measurement to close the connectivity gap is absolutely important for LDCs.

Commitments in paragraph 61 (a) and (b) to implement comprehensive and ethical financial and digital literacy programmes that target all segments of society is highly beneficial to our group.

While the outcome document outlines many positive areas, several crucial aspects need reinforcement to effectively eradicate digital divides and ensure universal STI access in LDCs:

* The outcome needs to strengthen commitments and establish clear targets on technology transfer, moving beyond mere knowledge sharing. This is in line with DPOA paragraph 179 that underlines the importance of facilitating technology transfer to LDCs under TRIPS Article 66.2.
* The document needs to leverage the untapped potential of LDCs to develop technology-driven entrepreneurships and enhance funding for innovative solutions relevant to the local context.
* While acknowledging the growing impact of AI, LDCs' primary challenge remains the lack of basic digital infrastructure. Capacity building and financing in this respect are crucial.
* It is important to facilitate partnerships between governments, international tech firms, and development organizations to bring expertise, technology transfer, and financial resources to LDCs are vitally important.
* LDCs need to be supported to build LDCs' capacity to attract and retain multi-stakeholder investment, including from the private sector and philanthropy, to expand and diversify their STI and digital solution capabilities.

In closing, we would like to reiterate that FfD4 must prioritize technology, innovation, and data to advance financial inclusion and development objectives for the most vulnerable and furthest behind.

We urge the international community to recognize the unique challenges faced by LDCs and to strengthen commitments in the areas highlighted. By doing so, we can ensure that the benefits of STI are equitably distributed, fostering inclusive and sustainable development for all.

Thank you.