Statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the Plenary of the Second Committee of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Agenda item 17: Information and communications technologies for sustainable development

(19 October 2018, CR-2, UNHQs)

Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I would like to align with the statements delivered by Egypt, as the Chair of the G77, and Malawi, as the Chair of LDCs.

The 2030 Agenda duly recognized the importance of the information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development that can boost investment, create jobs, accelerate social development, lower barriers to economic participation and improve governance and public service delivery. We welcome the recommendations made by the Secretary General in his report in addressing these issues.

Madam Chair,

As our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reflected in her address to the General Assembly during the High-Level Week that "Digital Bangladesh is to promote people's well-being", Bangladesh has utilized ICTs as effective tools for advancing its development. In the last ten years, the Government devoted its efforts to build 'Digital Bangladesh' and transform its economy and bring qualitative change in the peoples' lives. An extensive IT infrastructure covers the whole country. Internet density rate is growing. Services in education, health, agriculture and social protection are now being delivered online. Widespread introduction of internet -based public service delivery has led to growth in job creation at the grass root level. This has also improved the quality of the services provided to the people and reduced corruption and malpractices. Thus, ICTs have contributed to establishing good governance in the country.

We have given ICT sector immense priority in the 7th five year plan to boost particularly the rural economy. This has significantly reduced the transaction costs of trading with the urban economy, bring farms closer to growth centres, and financial services to the doorsteps of rural population. Our focus on access to finance could be materialized through internet-based

services. Providing such easy access to financial services to the women and people in the rural areas has improved their economic condition and reduced inequality. The central bank of Bangladesh had been playing a pivotal role by introducing mobile financial services. We are also exploring the use of ICT to ensure the growth of blue economy based on our vast marine resources.

The government continues its efforts to develop software capabilities through establishment of ICT Parks. It is offering public research grants and tax incentives to encourage private investment in software development.

Bangladesh is also a climate vulnerable and disaster-prone country. We are committed to utilize the ICTs not only to enhance our resilience against the negative impacts of climate change and reduce the risks of disasters but to ensure green growth and decarbonized industrialization.

In May this year, Bangladesh entered the space era with the successful launching of its first satellite *Bangabandhu I.* With this technological feat, we hope that we would make our people more risk-informed and more resilient.

We are concerned that our hard-earned gains in the ICT sector is insecure as the cyber space remains open to many threats and risks. Critical infrastructures around the world have become regular target of cyber-attacks. The risks from misuse of ICT can be serious for international peace, security and development. In Bangladesh, we are working on building a complete cyber security eco-system. Our Parliament has recently enacted the Digital Security Act. A Cyber security Incident Response Team is in place, which cooperates with other countries. A Digital Forensic Laboratory has been set up for training purposes. A National Cyber Security Agency is in the process of being set up. We also organized a high-level side event on cyber security and international cooperation during the high-level week of the General Assembly.

Madam Chair,

We are also witnessing the potential of the 4th Industrial Revolution to transform the world. At the same time there are apprehensions that technological gap may result in more inequality within and among the countries. It is important to address through international cooperation the challenges of the developing countries in accessing new technologies, bridge the digital divides, and preventing and combating the use of ICT for criminal purposes. It is also important to note that digital economy is an important part of the global economy now and we need the assistance of our development partners to develop our international trade capacities in this regard. The UN too can play a critical role in making the digital world safer by continuing its work on norm-setting in information security.

Thank you, **Madam Chair**.