Statement by Mr. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the Second Committee informal virtual meeting on joint consideration of agenda item 16, “Information and communications technologies for sustainable development” as well as agenda item 22, “Globalization and interdependence”, and its sub-items (a) and (b)
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Time Limit: 5 mins

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statements made by the Chairs of G-77 and China and of the LDCs. We thank the Secretary General for his reports under these agenda items.

The Secretary General’s progress report on the World Summit on Information Society is a testament to the enormous transformation that has happened in the digital world since 2005. Yet half of the world’s population, particularly women, and less than one in 5 people in the LDCs have no access to the internet. The COVID-19 pandemic has further revealed the different dimensions of inequality caused by the digital divide. And that include, exclusion from basic emergency supplies and services; digital education and digital health solutions; and remaining outside the benefits of e-governance, e-banking, and e-commerce.

Mr. Chairman,

Our national journey on digitalization is led by the vision of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to create a ‘Digital Bangladesh’ by 2021. Over the last decade, it
has contributed to rapid economic development and social changes in the country. And that is now playing a critical role in our Covid-19 response and recovery efforts.

Yet, we recognize that there are daunting challenges to achieve universal, affordable, and safe access to internet. We need to mitigate this gap to create equal opportunities for all, especially now as we venture to build back a better world. And we must help our future generation to reap the benefits of emerging technologies led by the 4IR.

Let me highlight two specific points in this regard:

**First**, we need the support of development partners; and they can do that by facilitating technology transfer in a meaningful manner; and by investing in digital infrastructure development. It is also imperative to leverage multilateral support frameworks including the *Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM)*, and the *Science Technology Innovation Initiative* to create a more inclusive digital world in the post COVID era. We welcome SG’s roadmap for digital cooperation in this regard.

**Secondly**, South-South and Triangular Cooperation can play a vital and complementary role in accelerating digitalization. Bangladesh is working with others to bolster cooperation among the countries of the South to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices and find innovative technological solutions to address global crises.
Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the issue of migration and development, which is of high priority to my country.

The contribution of the migrants to the socio-economic progress of their host countries as well as their countries of origin is well recognized. Yet, we see during the current crisis, that the migrants are bearing the heaviest brunt due to job losses, salary cuts, and lack of access to social security. Managing the return of migrant workers has become another challenge for many countries including Bangladesh. Over and above that, we face a shrinking overseas labour market and falling remittance flow. The consequences are going to be serious; and are certain to hinder the socio-economic achievements in many countries.

Let me share some specific proposals to address this situation:

**First**, we need global solidarity and cooperation to integrate migrants in the Covid-19 recovery strategy. National efforts must be supported by the UN and other international development partners and stakeholders. SG’s policy brief on “People on the Move” provides important directions in this regard.

**Second**, there should be political will for re-tapping into migrant workers’ expertise while resuming migratory flows. And this may require innovative approaches to international cooperation in migration management. The Global Compact on Migration remains a relevant framework in this context.
Finally, we need to adopt a holistic approach looking at post-Covid 19 situations, especially to help the migrant workers integrate with the ‘new normal’ of the post-COVID job market. It is imperative to re-create conditions for continuity of migrant workers’ contribution to economies and societies.

I thank you all.