Madame President,
Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,

It is an honor to participate in this “Ministerial session on Harnessing science and technology for the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions.” We wish to align with the statement to be delivered by Uganda on behalf of the G77.

In an increasingly digital and data-driven world, solutions hinge upon promoting digital inclusion as a means to eradicate poverty and leave no one behind. This has to be done at the local, national, regional, and global levels to bridge digital divides and enhance implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Digital transformation, technology and innovation are core objectives of the Philippine Development Plan. The Philippines recently ranked 56th out of 132 economies on the Global Innovation Index.

In this regard, we have launched phase 1 of our government-owned National Fiber Backbone or National Broadband Plan which aims to strengthen public service delivery and boost economic growth. The project provides game-changing opportunities and represents a monumental leap forward in our journey towards a digitally empowered society. We are bringing high-speed internet to underserved communities, unlocking opportunities for education, healthcare, and socio-economic development.
By 2026, the Department of Information and Communications Technology expects to increase the penetration rate from 33% to 65% and reach 70 million Filipinos out of the current 115M population. This project will also lower the price of internet connectivity.

By extending the reach of our digital infrastructure, we are leveling the playing field and empowering every Filipino to participate in the digital economy.

We have established more than 13,000 free wifi access points in public spaces throughout the country, most especially in the GIDA areas.

Our Smart Village and Smart Islands initiative is an innovative and collaborative approach to bringing connectivity and digital services to underserved and unconnected communities, in partnership with the ITU and other countries in the Asia-Pacific.

Another initiative is our Digital Cities 2025 program that highlights the value of countryside development and the capability of key locations outside the National Capital Region to become thriving business districts and viable investment hubs for innovation and information technology.

Aside from the identification of 25 Digital Cities across the country, the government seeks to support them through better facilitation of permits and licenses, tax incentives, institutional development, talent attraction and capacity building, infrastructure development, and marketing and promotion.

The Philippines recognizes the importance of fostering a supportive ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship in the digital sector, most especially for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. Programs on digital entrepreneurship, enhancing a “gig” economy and helping build startups are among the strategies adopted.

Through policies and programs that promote startup incubation, access to financing, and collaboration between the public and private sectors, we are creating an innovative tech-forward economy in which our peoples can live up to their full potential and aspirations.

Thank you.