

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Lok Bahadur Thapa
Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations
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ECOSOC Chamber**

**Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Science, technology, and innovation (STI) are advancing at a speed and scale unparalleled in history.

It is driving unprecedented and transformative changes in every sphere of our lives.

And, STI has remained a powerful catalyst for global progress, prosperity, and sustainability.

Nepal is committed to capitalizing on STI as an enabler for the transformation of its economy.

We want to make the country as a hub for digital services, fostering job creation for youth.

We prioritize the development of robust digital public infrastructure, expansion of broadband connectivity, and greater accessibility to technology, ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth in the digital age among others.

Mr. Chair,

Leveraging the full potential of STI is constrained, however, by many challenges:

- Insufficient digital public infrastructure;

- Deepening technological gaps

- Lack of connectivity;

- Limited and unequal access to advanced technologies;

- Limited national capacity;

- Inadequate financial support for research, innovation, and tech startups;

- Digital literacy gaps, and limited STEM education opportunities

- Growing threats to data privacy, and cybersecurity vulnerabilities

- And, insufficient international support and collaboration in STI

Developing countries, particularly the countries with special situations, including LDCs, are facing more difficulties.

Overcoming these challenges, we need a robust, unified, and coordinated approach both at the national and global levels.

We must close the digital and AI divides **with urgency and priority.**

We strongly call for sufficient development cooperation for digital infrastructure, accelerated technology transfer, and assistance for capacity building and entrepreneurship.

Access to STI funds must be smooth and prioritized for LDCs and the most vulnerable countries.

We should help foster entrepreneurship among the youth and finance for robust digital ecosystems.

It is incumbent upon us to advance digital inclusion and digital literacy, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized communities.

We must support digital trade and IT service exports of developing countries, particularly LDCs.

Similarly, we must harness STI to drive inclusive growth, by empowering micro, small and medium enterprises.

It is also crucial to ensure effective data management through robust data governance frameworks.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal is committed to leveraging STI for inclusive growth, job creation, environmental protection, and stronger global partnerships.

For this, enhanced international cooperation in infrastructure, knowledge-sharing, technology transfer, capacity building, and financing is indispensable.

As we move towards the WSIS+20 review, we look forward to revitalizing our collective ambition to ensure that digital transformation through digital cooperation leaves no one behind.

Let us work together to ensure that science, technology, and innovation deliver for everyone, everywhere.

Thank you.