INTERVENTION BY DR. MOHAMED OMAR GAD, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE THIRD ANNUAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR THE SDGS (STI FORUM)

(New York, 5 June 2018)

Madam President, distinguished co-Chairs, Excellencies,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

1. First of all, the Group of 77 and China wishes to express its highest appreciation to the President of ECOSOC, as well as the two co-Chairs for convening this very important Forum. The Forum has a unique format and convening power, gathering representatives from governments, UN agencies, the private sector, the scientific community and other stakeholders to jointly explore how to harness science, technology and innovation for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. In fact, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has highlighted the potential of technology in achieving many Goals, but also and foremost as one of the key means of implementation of the Agenda, in an integrative manner.

3. The Group of 77 highly appreciates the potential of scientce, technology, and innovation in that regard. Yet, we should be cognizant of the structural inequality on innovative capacity, connectivity and access to technology that hinders harnessing that potential. The Group is still concerned about the continued widening digital and technology divide.

4. This situation is further hampered by capacity constraints and the lack of adequate technology infrastructure in developing nations, notably African countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, as well as countries and people under foreign occupation and the specific challenges facing middle-income countries. The Group cannot emphasize enough the importance of international cooperation to promote the development and use of information and communications technology, infrastructure, as well as capacity building,

notably through rapid universal and affordable access.

5. We would like to further highlight the need to encourage the development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer of technologies to all developing countries on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms.

Madam President, distinguished co-Chairs, Excellencies,

6. It is in this context that the Group has always been a key supporter of the initiative of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) which includes a UN inter-agency task team on STI for SDGs, an online platform and STI Forum, even before it was agreed on and mandated by the AAAA and the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, allow me to reiterate the urgent call by the Ministers of theG77 and China in 2017 for the online platform to become operational as soon as possible.

7. The Ministers have also recognized the need to bring into full play the role of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development as the United Nations torch-bearer in order to enhance the international scientific and technical cooperation and capacity-building.

Madam President,

8. Let me be clear that it is crucial to use the Forum as a platform for both developed and developing countries to collaborate in joint efforts in STI cooperation and exchange to help implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Allow me in that regard, to invite participants at the Forum to focus on ways to better harness the potential of innovation and technology in the following areas:

a) to contribute directly to the development in key sectors such as education, health, energy and food;

b) to provide opportunities for developing countries to bridge the digital and technology divides;

c) to identify new avenues to channel effective and sustainable technical assistance and capacity-building that is tailored to the specific needs and constraints of developing countries, which is indispensable to strengthen educational institutions and research and development organizations in developing countries;

d) to address the technology infrastructure as well as capacity constraints of developing countries, particularly in African countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, as well as countries and people under foreign occupation and the

specific challenges facing middle-income countries, and explore how international cooperation can help overcome these constraints;

e)   to encourage the development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, for their implementation of the SDGs.

Madam President, distinguished co-Chairs, Excellencies,

9. The current Chairmanship of the G77 has identified the frontier technologies among its priorities for the year. We believe it is crucial for developing nations to better engage on issues at the forefront of technological advances and its impact on various aspects of the economy and society. We look forward to consulting with you all on these issues, during the STI Forum and beyond.

10.   In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China wishes this Forum all success, as well as productive and informative discussions. Possible room for improvement for future STI Fora include an enhanced participation of developing nations by increasing the financial support to government representatives and innovators from the Global South.

I thank you.