STATEMENT BY MS MAYNA TEO,
DELEGATE TO THE 68th SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON AGENDA ITEM 16,
ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) FOR
DEVELOPMENT,
SECOND COMMITTEE,
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to start by associating my delegation with the statements made by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China, and by Brunei on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) on this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

2 Singapore would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at the regional and international levels.

3 According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)’s latest ICT Facts and Figures Report 2013¹, there are 6.8 billion mobile-cellular subscriptions worldwide, with global mobile-cellular penetration at 96%. As broadband penetration rates increase with greater affordability, almost 40% of the world's population, or 2.7 billion people, are now using the Internet – this is a ten-fold increase from the last decade.

It is against this backdrop that the 9th Ministerial Forum on ICT co-organised by Singapore and the World Economic Forum in June this year, adopted the theme “Shaping the Future through ICT”. The theme underscores the important role that ICT plays in a highly connected world, in promoting socio-economic development. In this regard, Singapore is concerned about the continuing gap in digital divide and broadband access between developed and developing countries.

This is because Singapore is a beneficiary of leveraging on ICT for development. Singapore was ranked overall 2nd (after Finland) in the Global Information Technology Report 2012-2013, published by the World Economic Forum for three consecutive years since 2010.

A successful example of ICT for development is Singapore’s e-Government strategy. In the United Nations e-Government Survey 2012, Singapore was ranked 2nd in the e-Participation Index and 10th in the e-Government Development Index; and topped the Waseda University International eGov Ranking 2013 for the 5th year running since 2009.

To develop our e-Government strategy further, we launched the eGov2015 Master Plan two years ago to create a more collaborative Government. The intention is to increase the citizens’ participation in governance through soliciting and harnessing their feedback and suggestions in order to provide better public service delivery.

In addition, Singapore implemented policies to narrow its internal digital divide. National programmes were introduced to provide our senior citizens with free access to IT training and computer resources, and a pan-disability training centre was
set up for the disabled to provide industry-relevant infocomm training and IT-related apprenticeship. Families that cannot afford a computer or broadband, especially households with school-going children, can tap on an assistance programme which offers students and persons with disabilities from low-income households the opportunity to own a brand new computer and subscribe to internet access at an affordable price.

9 Having experienced for itself the benefits that ICT brings to development, Singapore shares what it has learned with other members of the international community through the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). Since 1992, the SCP has organised training programmes for over 80,000 participants from 170 countries. In the area of ICT, over 8,700 officials from developing countries have been trained through more than 600 training courses, workshops and study visits conducted under the SCP.

Mr Chairman,

10 Singapore’s experience demonstrates the importance of ICT for development. In this context, Singapore supports a review by the General Assembly of the outcomes of the WSIS before the end of 2015, and hopes that the modalities of the review can be agreed by the General Assembly at the end of this year. A review in 2015 will be timely, given that ICT, as an enabler, is likely to feature in the post-2015 development agenda. Notably in its report, the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda stressed that to strengthen productive capacities, everyone should have access to modern infrastructure, like ICT.

Mr Chairman,
Singapore became independent in 1965 and we benefited from the help that other countries gave to us. As a country with very limited resources, we are acutely aware of the important leverage that ICT can provide to the process of development. Our experience underscores that a stakeholder approach is best. The private sector and civil society each have a role to play. With these driving factors, Singapore is committed to doing our part as a responsible global citizen and sharing our knowledge, expertise and experience in ICT with fellow countries.

Thank you.