

(Item 3 General Debate, March 8)

Thank you, Mr. President.

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of Austria, Denmark, Singapore, and the Republic of Korea, along with 56 States.

Digital transformation has brought about profound changes to the lives of individuals and the fabric of society. New and emerging technologies present a great opportunity to boost prosperity, promote inclusive societies and address many challenges facing the world, including attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. If not properly managed, however, they can pose new challenges for the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and respect for human dignity. In this regard, we welcome the ongoing work of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation to strengthen cooperation in the digital space taking into account relevant human rights norms.

Since the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, we have affirmed the universality, indivisibility, interdependency, and interrelatedness of human rights, including in the documents that led to the creation of this Council. This Council has set important standards for the full enjoyment of human rights including in digital contexts.

Building on these achievements, we must tackle the unprecedented impacts of new and emerging technologies from a human rights perspective. Numerous resolutions and Special Procedures mandate holders' reports have already sensitized the Council to some of these issues. However, we still take snapshots of the human rights impact of specific technologies or focus narrowly on specific themes. It is time to take a holistic approach to the broad spectrum of human rights implications posed by new and emerging technologies.

Such conversations should be conducted in an inclusive manner involving all relevant stakeholders. It is indispensable to strengthen interaction between this Council, academia, civil society and the private sector. It is also important to bring the technology industry into the equation to find adequate solutions as well as to ensure that all actors take a level of responsibility proportional to their influence, in accordance with relevant international principles and norms such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

For this Council to remain relevant in the digital era, it must keep abreast with the rapid technological change affecting people's lives all around the world. We call on this Council to facilitate multi-stakeholder conversations, and consider further action on the protection and promotion of human rights in the context of new and emerging technologies, including studying how we can manage the human rights challenges arising from them in a holistic and pragmatic manner while recognizing their possible contribution to the full enjoyment of human rights.

Thank you.