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UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

Agenda item 135
Proposed Programme budget for 2020

**Status of Implementation of the Information and Communications
Technology Strategy for the United Nations**

(A/74/353)

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by

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2 March 2020

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honor this morning to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the Status of the Implementation of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy for the United Nations (A/74/353).

In December 2014, in its resolution 69/262, the General Assembly endorsed and welcomed the five-year ICT strategy proposed by the Secretary-General in his report, A/69/517. The ICT strategy was designed to address the highly fragmented ICT landscape that existed at the time, to leverage technology as a strategic enabler for the work of the Organization and to help protect it from growing cybersecurity threats.

Since its approval, significant improvements have been made to the ICT landscape and much progress has been made towards the goal of coherent, reliable and efficient ICT in the United Nations.

Evidence of the progress made over the past five years is highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, for example;

- In 2014, there were 70 ICT units located in various departments, offices, and field missions. Many of these ICT units have been harmonized, with Regional Technology Centres linking the Office of Information and Communications Technology to the ICT units.
- Five years ago, 44 data centres housed the Organization's information assets. Today, the Enterprise Data Centres in Valencia and Brindisi constitute the main data centres for the Secretariat and facilitate disaster recovery, with many systems moved to cloud hosting.

- The One United Nations global wide-area network unified 594 locations and provides greater consistency in bandwidth across duty stations.
- When the ICT Strategy was proposed, there were approximately 131 help desks in operation across the Secretariat. Today, one Unite Service Desk provides services 24/7 for key enterprise applications, with faster response and resolution times, and higher user satisfaction.
- Applications in use were reduced from 2,340 when the strategy was first implemented to 988.

In addition, governance policies have been strengthened. Choices with respect to architecture and standards which enhance the ability of the Secretariat to utilize ICT as an enabler of mandate delivery, have been made. Operations have been solidified and new structures established to make core ICT services more effective, efficient, and resilient. Our capacity in the area of information security threats has been strengthened across the Secretariat in the areas of prevention; incident detection and response; as well as in governance, risk and compliance.

Finally, the Office has leveraged emerging technologies to develop innovative tools and solutions, including with respect to big data, analytics, and artificial intelligence. Frontier technologies have been applied to support the work of substantive departments. The progress made in modernizing and transforming ICT across the Secretariat has also created a foundation for innovative solutions and analytics to enable the core work of the United Nations.

Decisions of the General Assembly in late 2018 with respect to the Secretary-General's management reform proposals have also furthered the objectives of the ICT strategy. In this regard, the integrated Office of Information and Communications Technology became operational on 1 January 2019. This resulted in a significantly more coherent ICT landscape across the Secretariat by integrating the capacities in the former Department of Field Support with those of the Office of Information and Communications Technology which had been part of Department of Management.

Dual reporting lines of the CITO to the Under-Secretary-Generals for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, and for Operational Support — together with close partnerships with other Departments and Offices — have since been established and are enabling more effective and efficient ICT support to the UN Secretariat, including through innovative technology solutions.

Challenges, however, remain. Given the growing importance of ICT for global operations of the Secretariat and for mandate delivery, ensuring consistent investment in the required infrastructure and for ICT equipment replacement cycles remains critical. Additionally, strengthening compliance with ICT policy directives is key to reducing our information security vulnerability and to increasing interoperability. As such, these areas remain a focus of attention.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to thank this Committee for the support that it has given to our shared goal of strengthening the capacity of the Organization in the areas of ICT over the past few years. This has been central to the progress that has been made. Going forward, we will continue to need your support as ICT becomes an increasingly important enabler for the delivery of our global mandates.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.