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The Information and Communication Technology and Sustainable and Development

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In today's highly competitive and globalized environment, the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has increasingly played a vitally significant role in increasing organizational efficiency and productivity, ensuring cost-effective access to information and knowledge, and, facilitating better management and delivery of social services. The small and medium businesses seem to have benefited immensely by using and deploying ICT solutions to become part of the global production network and supply chains in the international marketplace.

ICTs are indeed a powerful tool of much broader proportion. Besides enabling the businesses to participate in the global markets, ICTs serve to promote political accountability, enhance citizens' empowerment, increase their access to knowledge, and help to strengthen governance at all institutional levels. If deployed prudently by the government, ICTs could be extremely instrumental in ensuring distributive justice and inclusive development. They could enable the people to articulate their needs; help establish networks and forums to aggregate those needs; and induce setting-up of mechanisms to integrate those needs in the upstream policy formulation and downstream decentralized development planning.

By increasing access to knowledge and information, ICTs also help strengthen and redefine governance at all institutional levels, thus empowering citizens and communities.

In view of the critical importance of ICTs to sustainable development and building the productive capacities of their economies, it is inevitably essential for the developing countries to encourage technological development and innovations. For the purpose, they need to:

- formulate national ICT policies that promote and establish an ICT-enabled economy;
- incentivize adoption of ICT solutions by the businesses to gain knowledge of the highly competitive markets;
- Deploy and increase ICT usage especially by government departments as also the small and medium businesses to provide and access credit, social and advisory services as also to achieve major efficiency and productivity gains.

It is also important to establish appropriate institutional and research entities to identify the ICT related development needs of businesses and public sector entities to be able to continue advancing the productivity and efficiency frontiers and attaining cost-effectiveness. Internet technologies and ICT integrated solutions need to constitute an indispensable part of businesses activities; e-governance to manage and deliver services responsively and efficiently; and e-commerce to promote businesses across the borders without physical presence. One of the major challenges, however, is the need for investment and allocation of financial resources to accelerate, up-scope and implement computer literacy and ICT tools and systems training programs among the country's young population. The e-empowerment of the youth is sine qua non for e-transformation of a country and bridging the digital divide.