10 March 2021

Excellency,

Sequel to my letter dated 27 January 2021, circulating the preliminary Concept Note for the High-level Thematic Debate on Digital Cooperation and Connectivity, to be held on Tuesday, 27 April 2021, in the General Assembly Hall, I have the honour to enclose herewith the preliminary programme.

The High-level Thematic Debate will include an opening segment, three panel discussions, a plenary segment and a closing segment. In light of the need to urgently address the digital divide and digital cooperation to support COVID-19 adaptation and recovery strategies, Member States are encouraged to participate in the plenary segment at the Heads of State and Government or Ministerial level, via pre-recorded video statements.

The list of speakers for the plenary segment will open for inscription on Tuesday, 16 March 2021 at 10 a.m. until Thursday, 15 April 2021, at 5 p.m. For inscribing on the list of speakers, please contact the General Assembly Affairs Branch (email: galindo@un.org with copy to gaspeakerslist@un.org).

The time limit for statements will be three minutes for individual delegations and five minutes for statements delivered on behalf of groups of States. The list of speakers will be established in accordance with established practices of the General Assembly. The provisional list of speakers, to be circulated on Monday, 19 April 2021, will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis, based on the level of representation. Time limits will be strictly implemented to allow all inscribed speakers to deliver statements. In view of the limited time available for the plenary segment, pre-recorded video statements will be played without introductions by the representatives physical

Provisional Programme

Member States are invited to focus their statements on contributions to the overall vision, goals and targets of ending the digital divide, enhancing global digital cooperation, and upscaling digital contributions to environmental action by 2030. In this regard, Member States are encouraged to describe national and regional challenges, policy responses and commitments, and announce partnerships, new multistakeholder initiatives and development cooperation.

Panel: 30 minutes Q&A: 15 minutes	Global digital connectivity can facilitate gathering and analyzing the global data needed to achieve the SDGs, and the Multilateral Environmental Agreements on Biodiversity, Land, Climate and Pollution. Global connectivity has the potential to greatly increase resource and technology efficiencies and reduce certain kinds of pollution, but it can also lead to entirely new services that require energy and increase pollution, sometimes with novel substances. Governments, the private sector, civil society and others play an important role in determining the balance between the two, including via market incentives. Whole-of-society approaches will be key to implementing the sustainable consumption and production patterns needed to realize benefits and avoid trade-offs. They will be especially important for managing rebound effects from the increased use of digital technologies. Guiding Questions: How can we close the digital divide in line with global environmental targets, including on energy, e-waste and sustainable consumption and production? How can greater digital connectivity, including access to more data, and predictive analytics, contribute urgent environmental action at all scales, including aligning international capital? How can environmental sustainability be directly encoded into the platforms, algorithms, and filters of the digital economy, including applications of Artificial Intelligence? What kind of partnerships and high priority collaborative actions are needed?