

70th Session of the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

*“Digital and Green Transformations for Sustainable Development
in the Region of Economic Commission for Europe”*

18-19 April 2023

Madam Executive Secretary,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me express gratitude for convening this session and providing us with a timely opportunity to exchange views on this important topic.

In the midst of the looming global crises in food, energy, finance, climate, environmental pollution and biodiversity; digital and green transitions emerge as the only solution for sustainable development.

The digital transformation has already brought significant changes to our lives and businesses, as was most evident during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have all witnessed the importance of digital technology and the greater level of flexibility and adaptability it provided during those times.

Numerous public services being at disposal to our citizens digitally, and the development of digital skills, lifelong learning and improvement of digital infrastructure turned out to be crucial.

In Croatia, along with the continued digital upskilling and reskilling to tackle the fast digital transformation of our economy and society, we have been focusing on further digitalization of our public administration as well.

In parallel, we find it important to further tackle the urgent issue of cybersecurity. In this regard, we are pleased with the recent EU

legislation related to ensuring greater level of cybersecurity of critical sectors.

It is crucial that we conduct digital transition in a way that protects our common values. In that sense human rights, rule of law and democracy must be upheld also in the digital sphere.

Digital and green are twin transitions. The higher level of digitalization, with the introduction of new technological solutions such as the ones offered by the AI, also helps reducing greenhouse gas emissions and negative impact on the environment.

Development of renewables, investments in energy efficiency and introduction of circular economy along with the measures to abate the greenhouse gas emissions, will have to be implemented any time soon if we are to prevent the possible harmful effects of global warming.

Facing the energy crisis (*caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine*) we had to adapt fast to the changed circumstances, diversify energy sources and put more emphasis on savings and green transition. By further accelerating development of renewables and increasing green investments, we believe we can turn the current situation into a new chance for our economies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Digital and green transformations are no longer a matter of choice, they are inevitable, necessary and unavoidable.

We must help our citizens to adapt to these new circumstances, since it is very important that no one is left behind in these transitions.

Thank you.