



Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Feridun H. Sinirliođlu

Permanent Representative of Turkey

at the

Ministerial Videoconference

***“Close the Digital Divides: the Digital Response to
COVID-19”***

New York, 1 July 2020

Honorable Ministers, Dear Participants,

-First, I would like to thank Estonia and Singapore for this important initiative and for drafting the Global Declaration on Digital Response to COVID-19.

- Turkey is pleased to support and co-sponsor the joint declaration.

-Covid-19 reconfirmed the importance of digital tools in the face of current global challenges.

-Last summer, long before the pandemic, Turkey announced “Digital Diplomacy Initiative”. And for the first gathering of Antalya Diplomacy Forum, again planned before the pandemic, we selected a similar theme: “Diplomacy in Digital Age”.

-Our timely focus on digital technologies helped us in our fight against the pandemic.

We were able to ensure social distancing, by facilitating working from home, distance learning, online shopping, online banking, e-government services, and many other essential functions.

-Investments in the health sector was particularly important. Smartphone applications (such as e-pulse and electronic integration of medical centers helped success of our health sector during the pandemic.

-However, the pandemic reconfirmed another fact of modern global system: “none of us is safe until everyone is safe”.

-The cure to our current challenges is not closing borders, but closing divides.

So, I suggest three general principles:

First, use technology to reduce inequalities. The digital divide among nations merits particular attention. We therefore take pride in hosting the UN Technology Bank for LDCs.

Second, transform the Internet to a properly governed space. Existing cooperation architecture is neither effective nor inclusive.

Third, join forces to create synergy and go beyond governmental capacity for digital transformation. It is time to increase the multilateral and multi-stakeholder engagement.

-Let’s turn this global crisis into an opportunity by jointly using innovation and technology. This is not a choice but a must.

Thank you.