

*Thank you Mr. Chair,*

*His excellency Urmas Reinsalu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia*

*His excellency Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore*

*Colleagues,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

I would like to thank Estonia and Singapore for organizing this important and timely video conference. We live in the digital age that has enormous impacts on people's lives and socio-economic development of all countries. Covid-19 have shown us the importance of applying digital technologies in promoting international cooperation to combat the pandemic and in creating new impetus for socio-economic recovery in the post Covid-19 era.

The application of digital technologies, however, also raises issues that many countries have to deal with, especially the digital divide among countries, and among communities within a country. Vietnam shares the concern with countries that are facing difficulties posed by digital divide. To overcome these difficulties, we believe that countries need to strengthen cooperation on improving digital infrastructure, especially in developing countries; building regulations on digital governance; thereby forming a safe, effective and efficient digital network. This requires close cooperation and contribution from all countries.

Vietnam and ASEAN have made great efforts in narrowing the digital divide and applying digital technologies to enhance international cooperation on many issues, including the prevention of Covid-19. As the chair of ASEAN, Vietnam has been working closely with member countries to implement the 2019 - 2025 Action Plan of ASEAN Digital Integration Framework, particularly in promoting digital trade, innovation, and enhancing ASEAN countries' readiness for digitalization. Since the beginning of 2020, in the context of Covid-19, Vietnam has held many online meetings in ASEAN and between ASEAN and partners, having put forward measures to help strengthen anti-epidemic cooperation and promote economic recovery.

Vietnam would like to enhance cooperation with countries around the world in efforts to narrowing the digital divide to better respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, and promote sustainable, inclusive and innovative development.

*Thank you./.*