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TWELFTH SESSION OF THE EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

STATEMENT

BY THE

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

ON

AGENDA ITEM 5: IMPACT OF AI ON CREATIVE INDUSTIRES, CULTURAL RIGHTS AND THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

28TH OCTOBER, 2025

Mr. Chair,

Nigeria thanks the panelists for their insightful interventions and appreciates the opportunity to participate in this important discussion. We commend the Expert Mechanism for advancing thoughtful dialogue on emerging technologies and development. We value the Mechanism's mandate, particularly its focus on ensuring that technological progress benefits peoples and communities in an inclusive and equitable manner.

2. For Nigeria, the relationship between Artificial Intelligence and cultural rights is very real. Our creative economy, from Nollywood, to Afrobeats, to traditional crafts and fashion, is not only a cultural treasure, but a source of livelihoods for millions of young people. These expressions shape our identity and our contribution to global culture.

3. We are already seeing AI systems that can imitate the voices of Nigerian musicians, replicate artistic styles and traditional textile patterns, sometimes without consent or recognition. This raises real concerns about how creators can continue to earn a livelihood and sustain their art when their work can be copied so easily.

4. At the same time, Nigeria recognizes the positive potential of AI. It can help preserve our local languages, expand global reach for young creators, and lower barriers to participation in cultural production. In line with our responsibility to create an enabling environment for development, Nigeria has already taken steps to support this balance:

- The National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics and the National Information Technology Development Agency train young Nigerians in digital skills, animation, and AI tools.
- The new Copyright Act (2022) modernizes protection for creators, including in digital and AI-assisted environments.
- Creative industry support programmes, including hubs and financing initiatives, help young artists turn creativity into sustainable livelihoods.
- Nigeria is also developing a National AI Strategy, grounded in inclusion, cultural respect, and responsible innovation.

5. In conclusion, we would like to ask, what practical steps can countries take to ensure that people in the creative industry can continue to earn a living in an age where AI can easily imitate their creative work?