Welcoming remark by Heung Youl Youm, co-chairman of JCA-DCC

TSB director, Mr Seizo ONOE remote,

Director General, Ministry of Science and ICT, Korea (Republic of), Dr Sanghoon Song,

Mr Carl Leitner, Technical officer, WHO and JCA-DCC co-chairman,

Distinguished colleagues and friends,

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening,

My name is Heung Youl Youm, Co-Chairman of JCA-DCC and SG17 chairman.

First of all, I sincerely thank Mr Seizo ONOE for giving us his insightful opening remarks remotely for the workshop. I also thank Dr Sanghoon Song for the welcoming remark introducing Korea's activities on innovative blockchain-based identity systems for the workshop. In addition, I thank you Mr Carl Leitner for providing the welcome remark which was wonderful and interesting. I welcome all participants to the workshop in-person or online across the world.

It is my pleasure and honor to add my welcome remark to this Joint ITU/WHO Workshop on "Future of Verifiable Health Credentials Beyond COVID-19", which is being held in Korea (Republic of), my homeland.

As you may know, JCA-DCC was established by the January 2022 Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) meeting and operates under the auspicious of TSAG. JCA-DCC is to coordinate standardization work on DCCs between relevant ITU-T Study Groups, external organizations, and forums, to foster the use of compatible data architectures for sharing data, and promoting interoperability, agility and safety for users, and all relevant stakeholders involved.

Early this year, the WHO announced the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) which began on 30 January 2020. It is, however, still critical to ensure global preparedness for future pandemics and ensure appropriate digital systems and specifications are in place. Verifiable health credentials can aid in pandemic preparedness as they provide a secure and efficient way to authenticate and share individuals' health information, such as vaccination status or test results, facilitating effective disease management and mitigating the spread of infectious diseases. There are ongoing discussions aiming to update the International Health Regulations (IHRs) to facilitate exchange of digitized versions of the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP), representing an example of a verifiable health credential.

Digital COVID-19 certificates have been implemented worldwide based on either the public key infrastructure (PKI) or on distributed ledger technologies (DLTs). They were a means to provide proof of vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate safe travel and curb further spread of the virus. Challenges, however, still persist in achieving global interoperability between the different implementations of digital COVID-19 certificates. There is a need to establish interoperability frameworks to ensure seamless verification and acceptance across borders.

Looking beyond COVID-19, there are opportunities to expand verifiable health credentials to cover other diseases, such as yellow fever or Monkeypox. Leveraging the lessons learned from digital COVID-19 certificates, a global trust framework for future verifiable health credentials that enhances healthcare efficiency and enables secure sharing of health information while respecting privacy could be envisioned.

The objectives of today's workshop, as developed by the steering committee, include:

- giving an overview on underlying technologies for implementing future Verifiable Health Credentials learning from the Digital COVID-19 Certificate;
- understanding the current regulatory/governance frameworks and implementations of Digital COVID-19 Certificate by countries and regions;
- identifying the shape of future Verifiable Health Credentials learning from the Digital COVID-19 Certificate;
- understanding how to build a trust framework to ensure interoperability of Verifiable Health Credentials issued globally;
- sharing on-going standardization activities on Verifiable Health Credentials including the Digital COVID-19 Certificate among relevant ITU-T study groups and other organizations;
- identifying ways forward including recommendations for ITU-T Study Groups and WHO to undertake in this area; and
- providing recommendations or advice related to Verifiable Health Credentials on the future of JCA-DCC

There will be a WTSA-24 in 2024 to consider the SG structure for the next study period (2025 - 2028). I believe that this is a very right time for ITU/WHO to hold this workshop for this JCA-DCC to provide recommendations or advice to TSAG for the future of JCA such as verifiable health credential.

On behalf of co-chairman of JCA-DCC, I thank ITU and WHO for giving an opportunity for hosting this workshop in Korea (Republic of) and I express my special thanks to my administration, Ministry of Science and ICT, for hosting this workshop and JCA-DCC meeting

here today.

I thank in advance our master of ceremony (Ms Gillian Markamara, TSB project officer), four session moderators, 16 excellent and prominent speakers for 3 sessions, and 5 panelists from all over the world for the insights they bring to the workshop.

I thank all the 22 Steering Committee members for your work during last 3 three months and TSB event teams, for their excellent support to this event, especially to Ms Gillian Makamara.

I also thank participants present in person and online from all over the world, and I hope you will find the workshop insightful and useful.

This concludes my remarks. Thank you very much.