The United States welcomes the opportunity to comment on the discussion of the establishment of an “International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture”. We welcome the use of an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach to discuss digital technologies in agriculture and food, but also stress the need for this work to be strongly scoped and context-specific. Indeed, the usefulness and applicability of digital technologies relies heavily upon the availability and accessibility of relevant context-specific and local data. Some of the barriers in this field, such as the accessibility, availability and affordability of digitalization, are outside of FAO’s traditional field of expertise, and addressing them may be better left to other international institutions. The Digital Council is definitely a starting point in mobilizing efforts and drawing attention to the Food and Agriculture sector.

The Digital Council should also avoid replication and duplication of the work the UN and other institutions have already carried out on digitalization in food and agriculture.

On the point “*Working collaboratively, such a Council would discuss and develop voluntary guidelines, provide advice to policymakers, and enhance knowledge-sharing on best practices that would contribute to sustainable agriculture and rural development during the digital transformation.”*The United States would like to stress the importance of ensuring that any advice or guidance provided by the Digital Council be indeed **voluntary, non-prescriptive, and non-binding**. The United States believes FAO is best placed to provide a neutral forum for an open and frank discussion of ***all***possible best practices, approaches and technologies that benefit all farmers and contribute to sustainable agricultural and rural development.

Specifically on [**Question 2**](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/files/162_Digital_Council/Discussion_guide_Q2.pdf#_blank): “How can the establishment of the Digital Council address the numerous barriers to adoption of these technologies?”

 We strongly concur with the principles of **Be Scalable** and **Be Efficient**:  This may favor software-based solutions that are easily transferred into new contexts.

 We would like to propose an additional principle of **Be Connected**: The Digital Council should connect to existing research, best practices and online tools.

Please note: these are initial and preliminary comments. The United States welcomes the opportunity to comment further and to continue playing an active role in the future.