

7th Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs

Thematic Session 6: Delivering on the SDGs: Next steps for the TFM and its partners

UNHQ New York, Conference Room 2 and virtual (hybrid format)

6 May 2022, 16:25 – 16:45

Remarks by

H.E. Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Forum has highlighted the great potential that STI holds to support the realization of the SDGs. We heard about a number of innovative initiatives that could be scaled up. We learned important lessons about the policies needed to support science, technology and innovation at the national, regional and global levels.

Allow me to also highlight some of the items that could inform the work of the TFM in the coming years.

There was broad agreement on the crucial role played by Science, Technology and Innovation in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in the global efforts to develop vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics in record time. However, the experience has also shown the need to strengthen preparedness, and to ensure greater sharing of data and information, collaboration on research, and sharing of lessons learned. There is also a need to overcome inequities in the distribution of vaccines, to develop manufacturing capacities in more countries, to counter misinformation, and to continue the research efforts to battle future virus-variants. One element that was highlighted was the need to include and engage the most vulnerable populations in the process of STI policy-making and implementation.

Another issue is the role of STI in education. Digital technology played a key role in enabling the continuation of educational activities for millions during the pandemic. However, it was noted that technology was not a silver bullet. The shift to online education exposed a sharp digital divide, with more than 1 billion children without access to the internet at risk of being left behind. Further efforts are required to bridge the digital divide, and strengthen digital skills training, and we have heard about many initiatives in this regard. But the shift to digital education tools also led to decreased educational achievement and mental health issues. Recovery from the pandemic in education must include interventions that address all areas of child development, including social, emotional, physical, and cognitive education. This will also require the development of new curricula and continuous professional development for teachers. It was emphasized that too often investment in educational technology was focused on technology, rather than the human being. We need evidence-informed policies and multistakeholder partnerships to make an impact. Differences in capacities between countries should also be acknowledged to bridge the current divides.

Another key aspect to address is the continuing gender divide in STI. Women make only 1/3 of the workforce in the STEM field, and the gender gap is high. We have had the opportunity to see and listen to eminent women scientists and engineers who can inspire younger generations of women to believe in the power of science. Science and technology policies should focus on education of girls and other vulnerable groups.

I hope that the TFM in cooperation with the CSTD will be able to take up these issues and continue to make key contributions in the field of STI policy.

Excellencies,
ladies and gentlemen,

We recognize the achievements of the UN Inter-Agency Task Team in supporting the design of STI for SDGs roadmaps in the six Global Pilot countries, including my own country - Ukraine. STI roadmaps are an important tool to reach the 2030 Agenda objectives and will be key during the post-war recovery of Ukraine. More countries should be able to engage in this process to make sure that STI is mobilized to address the challenges of our time and for the future.

In this regard we appreciate and are ready to endorse the Partnership in Action on STI for SDGs roadmaps and call for other Member States to join by sharing their experiences and good practices, establishing a platform of like-minded partners on STI for SDGs.

Lastly, I would like to use this occasion to express my gratitude to the representatives of the Secretary-General's 10 member-group for their important work in putting this STI Forum together. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the many UN agencies brought together in the Inter Agency Task Team, co-coordinated by UN-DESA and UNCTAD.

I also thank all the speakers, moderators and participants of this Forum for their contributions to these important discussions.

Thank you very much.