

## **6<sup>th</sup> Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals**

**4-5 May 2021, UN HQ New York (virtual)**

### *Session 1: STI Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic*

[Background note and guiding questions](#)

#### **Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the potential for science and technology to solve pressing global problems and support the advancement of the well-being of current and future generations. Consider how rapidly vaccines were developed and how knowledge was pooled across borders and sectors for this purpose, and how the application of digital technologies has scaled up to support social and economic systems while social distancing and stay-at-home orders are in effect. Ventilator design sharing, clinical trials with public-private partnerships, advances in medical imaging, science to inform social distancing guidelines – these have all pointed to the role of science for the public good. This shows how much progress can be made in only one year when the shared motivation and collaboration is there to mobilize financial and technical resources. It shows how important STI is for supporting SDG implementation and building resilience against and preventing future crises.

But the development and applications of STI are shaped by existing inequalities and can contribute to exacerbating them. For science to meet our shared aspirations and further progress towards realizing the 2030 Agenda, we must strengthen the science-policy-society interface and advance international cooperation around science, technology and innovation. We must also build public trust in science, ensure that scientists have access to the data and knowledge needed to support innovation, and deepen the capacity for STI production and use in all regions and in least developed countries to ensure that no one is left behind.

#### **Objectives**

This session will explore lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for a better science-policy-society interface, a resilient, sustainable and inclusive recovery, and rapid solutions for global challenges. This will include reflections on the response of the scientific community to the pandemic, its impact on open science, building trust in science, support for the economic and social recovery, including through the creative economy, digital technologies and advancing gender equality, as well as lessons-learned on how to better harness science and technology to resolve global challenges.

#### **Format**

The session will be structured as a moderated panel discussion (5 minutes per panelist). After the panelists' interventions, the moderator will take comments and questions from the audience during an interactive

discussion. The session will close with a brief presentation of main outcomes of the discussion by the moderator.

### **Questions for discussion**

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What are some of the most promising shifts in the science-policy-society interface that have developed during the last year as the world responded to the pandemic? How can these be further encouraged?
- What kinds of policies and institutions are needed to ensure that pandemic related STI shifts reduce rather than exacerbate inequalities?
- What are lessons from the past year that can inform how STI is applied to further resilience and prevention against future crises?

### **Supporting documents/publications**

- [COVID-19 Pandemic: Technical Guidance for Nuclear Medicine Departments | IAEA](#)
- [UN/DESA Policy Brief #62: The COVID-19 pandemic: a wake-up call for better cooperation at the science–policy–society interface](#)
- IATT report for the STI Forum: “Emerging science, frontier technologies, and the SDGs – Perspectives from the UN system and science and technology communities” (May 2021)