

ECOSOC Partnership Forum 2024

“Resilient prosperity: Strategic Partnerships to Advancing Science, Technology, and Innovation in Small Island Developing States”

January 30, 2024, 1:15 – 2:30 PM

Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York

Remarks by H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

I would like to welcome all participants to this side event entitled “Resilient prosperity: Strategic Partnerships to Advancing Science, Technology, and Innovation in Small Island Developing States”, in the margins of the ECOSOC Partnership Forum 2024. I have the pleasure to open this side event with my co-organizers, UNDESA and ITU.

It goes without saying that advancing Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) is crucial to drive a paradigm shift in SIDS and to achieve their sustainable development agendas. We are convening this side event at a critical juncture, as we move towards the STI Forum scheduled from 9th to 10th May; the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) to be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27th to 30th of May; the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July; and the Summit of the Future in September.

With so many pressing issues on the agenda, it is clear that the need to address the technology gap and digital divide is imperative for small island developing states to stave off widening inequalities. New and emerging technologies offer many potential benefits to address the multidimensional challenges faced by SIDS, but the pace of revolutionary advancements threatens to keep us forever out of reach. Having recognized the pitfalls, we have highlighted the necessity of adequate support and strategic partnerships, spanning from addressing urgent and innovative financing, to coordination that facilitates trade and connectivity, to critical governance and policy needs and institutional strengthening. Systematic efforts to build capacity and sustainable platforms alongside policy frameworks are key to successful collaboration.

Last year the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines moved forward in the final stages of the development of a National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, with the assistance of ECLAC. At the core, our efforts aim to leverage STI as a fundamental tool to support the transformation of productive sectors of the economy, address climate change, ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, and create an environment for greater research, innovation and development. To achieve these aims we know that we need the involvement of a wide cross-section of stakeholders, from academia to the private sector and including the grassroots.

It is our hope that the presentations and the discussion today will serve to shed light on initiatives being undertaken and what is missing; and stimulate discourse geared towards enhanced and tailored partnerships, which can feed into the outcomes we wish to see for the important upcoming processes this year.