

United Nations Group of Ten High-level Representatives of Civil Society, Private Sector and Scientific Community to Promote Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (10-Member-Group)
- a component of the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015, which was held from 25 to 27 September 2015 in New York, adopted a new development agenda for the following 15 years, entitled “*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” (A/69/L.85)¹. Paragraph 70 of the Agenda launched a “*Technology Facilitation Mechanism which was established by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in order to support the Sustainable Development Goals*”. This paragraph was already contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July 2015.

Member States agreed that the “*technology facilitation mechanism will be based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders and will be composed of a United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals (IATT), a collaborative multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals and an online platform.*”

They further decided that the IATT will “*work with 10 representatives of civil society, the private sector and the scientific community to prepare the meetings of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs, as well as in the development and operationalization of the online platform.*”

The present document lays out terms of reference for this United Nations Group of Ten High-level Representatives of Civil Society, Private Sector and Scientific Community to Promote Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs – henceforth referred to as “10-Member-Group”.

Purpose and tasks

The 10-Member-Group shall thus work with the UN Inter-agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals – henceforth referred to as “IATT”², to which it will provide ideas, guidance and recommendations. It represents and mobilises inputs from civil society, private sector and scientific communities around the world. In particular, it is engaged in supporting the development and operations of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, notably:

- a) To “*...prepare the meetings of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals...*”, including in terms of substantive inputs to background documentation, such as science-policy briefs and related inputs from scientists and engineers, and mobilisation of speakers and partnerships;
- b) To support “*...the development and operationalization of the online platform...*”;
- c) To prepare “*...proposals for the modalities for the forum and the online platform...*”;
- d) To engage in and support selected IATT work streams in their respective area of expertise, including by facilitating partnerships with science, technology and innovation (STI) communities and by mobilizing resources for the TFM;
- e) To assist in the preparation of the co-chairs’ summary of the Forum, of the broader outcomes and follow-up to the Forum, and in this context provide recommendations and advice on specific technology solutions and partnerships, as well as more broadly on science, technology and innovation issues for the SDGs;
- f) To provide scientific and technological advice, briefings and other inputs to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, or other relevant UN fora, as requested;
- g) To consider exchanging views and providing inputs on emerging technology to the Independent Group of Scientists (IGS) for the GSDR, upon request; and

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

² Agreed terms of reference of the IATT: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/8569TOR%20IATT%2026%20Oct%202015rev.pdf>

- h) To advise the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism on policy and substantive ways forward, inter alia, on STI roadmaps for the SDGs, capacity building, social inclusion, gender and STI, research findings, and the impacts of rapid technology change and digitalisation;

Composition

The Secretary-General decided that the composition of the 10-Member-Group shall reflect gender and geographic balance and ensure a mix of disciplinary expertise capturing science, technology and innovation aspects across the full range of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group's members shall have internationally recognized excellence in their field or fields of expertise and shall have demonstrated an understanding of international processes related to science, technology, innovation and sustainable development. They shall serve in their personal capacity and not as a representative of a Government, corporation or organization. The Group shall comprise distinguished experts drawn from civil society, the private sector, and the scientific community, as mandated. Those may thus include representatives of academia, philanthropic, non-governmental organizations, and other individual experts.

Members of the Group can hold employment with an NGO, a private sector entity, academia, civil society or Government provided they are working closely on issues related to science, technology and innovation. Government employees with a largely political role, however, shall not be qualified for appointment to the Group.³ UN organizations will continue to be represented through the IATT.

Appointments

Members of the 10-Member Group shall “...*be appointed by the Secretary-General, for periods of two years*” at a time. Members may be reappointed for another term. Terms of individual members or the entire Group may be extended by the Secretary General based on need and timing of the mandated tasks of the Group. In case of delays in the constitution of a new 10-Member-Group, the term of the old 10-Member-Group shall be automatically extended beyond the two-years-time limit on an interim basis until the next Group is confirmed by the UN Secretary General.

Compensation

The members of the 10-Member Group shall not receive any honorarium, fee or other remuneration from the UN. However, efforts will be made to cover travel and daily subsistence costs for their participation in the Group's meetings, including in the annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with UN rules and regulation.

Secretariat

A representative of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs shall serve as “Secretary” to Group. He/she shall participate ex-officio in the 10-Member Group deliberations and provide Secretariat services. He/she shall collaborate in this task with the Secretariat and possibly the wider membership of the IATT, as the need may arise.

Working Methods

The working methods shall be as follows:

- a) The 10-Member Group will meet at least twice each year. The frequency of meetings can be adjusted by the Group as the need may arise. Meetings may be held virtually or face-to-face.
- b) The Secretariat shall support communications within the 10-Member Group, between the group and the IATT and between the group and the High-level Political Forum as needed.
- c) The Group will function with two co-Chairs, to be appointed by the Secretary-General.
- d) The 10-Member Group shall strive to make its decisions by consensus. In case no consensus can be reached, decisions can be made by simple majority of its members in which case the IATT will be notified that the decision

³ E.g., current chief scientists of governments do not qualify for appointment, but academics in government-run laboratories or think-tanks do.

was reached by voting. In case no majority can be reached, the co-chairs may take a decision to ensure the group's capacity to act.

- e) The meetings of the 10-Member Group shall be closed unless it decides otherwise. They will be open to participation by the Secretariat.
- f) The 10-Member Group may operate, even if there are vacancies in its composition.

The 10-Member Group may at any time revise its working methods by consensus.

The 10-Member-Group is encouraged to submit a report to the Secretary General and to produce or mobilise substantive materials for the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs.

For each consecutive selection and two-year cycle of a 10-Member Group, the Secretariat shall update the present terms of reference, in order to ensure coherence with existing mandates at the time.

Former members of the Group

Former 10-Member-Group members can continue to be associated voluntarily and informally with the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the IATT workstreams even after the completion of their term. Active alumni members may be invited as external experts to meetings of the 10-Member-Group, as the need may arise.