STI FORUM

Science, Technology & Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

9th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

9-10 May 2024

Trusteeship Council Chamber

United Nations Headquarters, New York

"Science, technology and innovation for reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions"

DRAFT Programme

Thursday, 9 May 2024

Welcome and Opening

(10:00 – 10:40)

Opening Remarks

- H.E. Ms. Paula Narvaez, President of ECOSOC
- H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (presented by Mr. Li Junhua, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs)
- H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly

Ministerial session under the theme "Harnessing science and technology for the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions"

(10:40 – 12:00)

The 10-Member-Group will present a brief framing/guiding note on the theme of the Forum for consideration by speakers. The list of Ministerial speakers will include the chair of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development who will report on the outcomes of the Commission's 26th session.

Chaired by Forum co-chairs.

Guiding questions

- *What lessons have we learned about harnessing STI to enable SDG progress?*
- *What should we do differently in the second half of 2030 Agenda implementation to enable STI solutions to drive transformation?*
- *What are some promising country experiences and practices that can inform the way forward?*

Including statements by:

- Mr. Li Junhua, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

- Chair, UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development **(to be appointed at CSTD in April 2024)**
- Ms. Joyeeta Gupta **(India, Netherlands)**, Co-chair, Secretary General's 10-Member-Group of High-level Representatives of Scientific Community, Civil Society and Private Sector **[framing presentation]**

General debate / List of Ministerial speakers

Thematic session 1. More and more effective funding and capacity for SDG related research and innovation in all regions (SDG17)

(12:00 – 13:00)

This session will explore the status of global research cooperation and funding - especially in the Global South – for the achievement of the SDGs. It will bring together key public and private funders of research and development (R&D) and other key R&D actors. Following a global status overview, specific cases of R&D cooperation and funding will be discussed, including cases of global and regional cooperation across borders and academic disciplines. These cases will illustrate how important international arrangements have become for global R&D and how indispensable they are for an effective response for achieving the SDGs. A conversation among key R&D funders and key R&D actors from public and private sectors will explore best practices and new ideas on how to better share knowledge, improve the current funding systems, and to strengthen collaboration and build new partnerships. The session is expected to identify high-impact actions based on lessons learnt.

Guiding questions:

- *How can incentives be designed to increase funding levels and increase the effectiveness of SDG-related research and innovation in all regions?*
- *What steps can be taken to build capacity for generating and using STI for sustainable transformations?*
- *How can the Technology Facilitation Mechanism be strengthened to contribute to advances in STI for the SDGs?*

Thematic session 2. Strengthening scientific cooperation, technology and knowledge sharing and accelerating innovation for integrated climate action (SDG13)

(15:00 – 16:30)

Climate action – SDG13 – lies at the heart of solutions to tackling today's interconnected crises of nature, biodiversity, pollution but also inequality, poverty, and development. Addressing the climate emergency and its interlinkages to other crises requires transitions in energy, agrifood, mobility, and other key sectors in ways that are just and leave no one behind. Science, technology, and innovation (STI) play critical roles in these transformations. This session explores the role of STI in accelerating integrated climate action and synergistic solutions. It also addresses the role of important approaches such as open science that can contribute to ensuring that no one is left behind. The session brings together leading experts in this field to shed light on what it takes to unlock ambitious STI policies, approaches, and initiatives that can help leverage knowledge, innovation, and technological solutions towards a net-zero and climate-resilient future.

Guiding questions:

- *How can the open sharing of climate data and knowledge be improved?*
- *What can be done to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries?*
- *What can be done to accelerate climate-relevant innovation for transformation in developing countries?*

- *How can siloes be broken at all levels to ensure integrated STI approaches to climate mitigation and adaptation?*
- *What cases can be highlighted to illustrate the potential of open science and inclusive approaches to STI for climate action?*

Thematic session 3. Bridging the science, technology and innovation divides to eradicate poverty and end hunger (SDGs 1 and 2)

(16:30 – 18:00)

Despite efforts, progress towards SDG 1 and SDG 2 has been insufficient to meet the goals set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The situation has worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2019 and recovery has been uneven. Science, technology and innovation can give an important contribution to reversing this trend and accelerating progress. Questions of poverty, food security and nutrition are particularly intertwined in the lives of rural, indigenous and local communities, including small-scale producers and family farmers, forest-dependent people, and fishers. Hence, ability to fully benefit from science, technologies and innovations can be particularly transformative for them. This session will consider what promising research and technologies, including affordable and open-source technologies and innovations, can be employed to rapidly reverse increases in poverty and hunger and to address synergies and trade-offs with other SDGs. The session will highlight the causes of poverty and food insecurity including unemployment, social exclusion, and high vulnerability of populations to climate change impacts and disasters.

Guiding questions:

- *What promising research and technologies, including affordable and open-source technologies, can be employed to rapidly reverse increases in poverty and hunger and address trade-offs with other SDGs?*
- *How can STI in these areas be adapted to local socio-economic environments with different risk factors and engage with local knowledge?*
- *What are some promising cases of STI for poverty eradication and food security that can be considered in other contexts?*

Reception and showcase of Innovations for SDG 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17.

18:15 – 19:30, Sputnik Lounge (tbc)

The STI Forum co-chairs invite participants to a reception and event to showcase innovations in local communities and beyond. A particular focus will be highlighting innovations that address multiple SDGs (the in-focus SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17) and/or that address the needs of vulnerable communities. Innovators will describe their cutting-edge initiatives and share insights from their experience implementing development solutions. They will discuss opportunities for these new technologies to accelerate sustainable and inclusive recovery from the pandemic towards a brighter future.

Friday, 10 May 2024

Thematic session 4: Building ecosystems for science, technology and innovation to drive economic growth and sustainable development in Small Island Developing States

(10:00 – 11:30)

The session will take stock of the current state of STI for the SDGs in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). SIDS challenges, including their small and undiversified economies, distance from large markets and trade routes, and extreme vulnerability to exogenous shocks, especially natural disasters and climate change, are well known. SIDS policymakers and other stakeholders have also been pointing out, for many years, that their lack of high-quality disaggregated data undermines SIDS development progress. This session will shine new light on these challenges but will focus more heavily on SIDS strengths and opportunities in the STI arena, including in disaster risk reduction, renewable energy, health, marine science and fisheries, and governance-related technology, among others. Partnerships are central to strengthening the STI ecosystem, and this session will also spotlight successful North-South, South-South and especially SIDS-SIDS STI partnerships.

Guiding questions:

- *What challenges and opportunities do SIDS face in accessing and employing STI to accelerate economic growth and ensure sustainable development? How can STI roadmaps and other investments in institutions and capacity help to address these impediments?*
- *What cases can be highlighted showing the power of STI for SIDS' implementation of the SDGs?*

Thematic session 5: Harnessing the power of digital innovation for sustainable peace and resilience in the context of climate change (SDG 16)

(11:30 – 13:00)

SDG 16 is about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. In today's world, climate change impacts are already exacerbating competition over natural resources, undermining livelihoods, and contributing to forced displacement, increasing the risk of social tensions, instability, and conflict. Digital innovation and artificial intelligence can provide novel solutions for enhancing peace and resilience, for example through enhancing early-warning systems for natural hazards; improving analysis of converging risks; highlighting response options, including nature-based solutions; improving resource optimization and responses to humanitarian crises or through better understanding of migration patterns. This session will highlight some of the new opportunities and also assess their related social, environmental and ethical challenges.

Guiding questions **(revised questions)**:

- *How to harness science and technology to make progress on SDG16 to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"?*
- *What institutional changes are needed to increase the use of science and evidence for more inclusive and responsive policymaking in support of sustainable development?*
- *How can trust in science be strengthened while countering misinformation in ways that contribute to justice, peace and inclusion?*
- *How can digital transformation be leveraged for integrated climate and conflict-sensitive policy-making?*
- *What are some promising cases of leveraging science and technology for environmental conservation and climate adaption in support of peace, justice and inclusion?*

Thematic session 6. Advancing sustainable development with women-centered science and technology solutions

(15:00 – 16:20)

This session brings together two important accelerators for sustainable development: gender equality and science, technology and innovation (STI). It delves into the successes and challenges of diverse initiatives from governments, international organizations, business and civil society in forging innovative **solutions to advance sustainable development and promote gender equality**. These include women-led initiatives for sustainable development, as well as solutions that specifically target obstacles

faced by women and girls. Stakeholders will present their success stories and share their perspectives on gender and STI in times of multiple crises. How to enhance women's roles in decision-making and peaceful governance and how to foster and strengthen global partnership in policy-making for women and girls in STEM will also be discussed.

Guiding questions:

- *What are key challenges to and opportunities for integrating a gender perspective into STI policies to effectively address socio-economic development challenges?*
- *How can resources be directed toward research and innovation that address gender divides?*
- *How can STI initiatives also address interlinkages and intersectionalities of exclusion related to age, ability, ethnicity and others?*
- *What are some promising cases where a gender lens has been applied to connect women with innovative SDG solutions crafted with, by and for women?*

Thematic session 7. STI partnerships for accelerating structural transformation in African countries, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries

(16:20 – 17:45)

According to the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), the current global landscape of science, technology, and innovation—including investments, human and institutional capacity, and enabling policy environments—is very unbalanced between the Global North and Global South, with Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and many African countries suffering the greatest shortfalls. The GSDR cites a recent UNESCO study showing that per capita national spending on research and development in high-income countries was 65 times higher than in lower-middle-income and low-income countries. At the same time, there is enormous potential for expansion of the STI ecosystem in these countries, driven in part by their young populations (60% of today's population of Africa is under 25). Robust, creative science partnerships that engage the Global North and South, will be important, as will investments and initiatives that discourage "brain drain" and reward practitioner-academic hybrid careers. The current session will explore these issues and other building blocks of a vibrant STI ecosystems in LDCs, LLDCs, and the African continent.

Guiding questions:

- How can STI contribute to structural transformation in African countries, LDCs and LLDCs?
- How can partnerships improve connectivity and enable digitalization?
- What key gaps need to be addressed to scale up STI in these areas and how can national, regional, and international institutions contribute?
- What are some promising cases that show how partnerships can strengthen the links between STI and SDG achievement in countries in special situations?

Closing session

(17:45 – 18:00)

- Mr. Carlos Henrique Brito Cruz **(Brazil)**, Co-chair, Secretary General's 10-Member-Group of High-level Representatives of Scientific Community, Civil Society and Private Sector
- Her Excellency Christina Markus Lassen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, Co-Chair of the 2024 STI Forum
- Her Excellency Inga Rhonda King, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Co-Chair of the 2024 STI Forum
- H.E. Ms. Paula Narvaez, President of ECOSOC