



Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and great pleasure to greet you today, on behalf of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and participate in the 9th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Indeed, the role of science, technology, and innovation is of paramount importance in securing a sustainable future for all countries including Georgia - a small nation, for which STI is even more vital.

Over the past decade, Georgia effectively withstood global turbulences and achieved strong economic growth through our commitment to SDGs and by building and fostering nationwide STI ecosystem, ensuring the quality of science; defining priority technology areas, developing of national AI strategy and promoting digitalization.

We developed effective support mechanisms in line with international best practices to support development of innovation ecosystem and create more opportunities for innovative minds. As a result, in just a period of over 5 years, we have managed to develop a favourable and highly attractive ecosystem for innovators and high-tech startup from South Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe while Georgian startups are becoming more appealing for global markets and investors.

We have secured institutional support mechanisms at the national and regional levels to strengthen scientific research, innovation, and entrepreneurship, with the development of Technology Transfer Office of the Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency, Horizon Europe University Offices and Tech-Parks operating at the national or regional levels.

We have also enhanced our efforts to internationalize science in Georgia in order to increase the quality, productivity, and competitiveness of our scientific system.

Within the framework of bilateral and multilateral international cooperation formats, we continue to support participation of Georgian scientific-research groups in international joint projects, as well as the mobility of Georgian and foreign researchers for scientific purposes.

Just over a month ago, the Prime Minister of Georgia has declared the priority technology areas of Georgia that include Artificial Intelligence, Bacteriophages and AgriTech. These directions have been identified based on thorough analysis of Georgia's needs, resources and competitive advantages.

The decision is made to develop Excellence Centres around the priority directions where the application of research in AI, Bacteriophages and AgriTech will be accelerated, where new technologies will be further developed, scaled up and realised. The Centres will provide both private and public entities with access to their expertise and facilities, enabling them to test, demonstrate and improve their ideas.

In order to foster responsible and ethical development and integration of AI in Georgia, we have started the development of comprehensive National AI Strategy that will encompass the pillars of General Population Up-skilling; Education; Healthcare; Biotechnology and AgriTech.

Through these efforts, initiatives and plans that promote development of science, technology and innovation, we are determined to achieve a 1.5% share of total R&D expenditure in country's GDP by 2030.

I would also like to mention the achievements in developing institutional and policy framework for digital transformation of Georgia. We have further developed crosscutting digital services and expanded e-government system in treasury and state budget management, tax administration, public procurement, HR management and other areas.

As a conclusion, I would like to underline that considering the significance of the matters that will be discussed throughout these two days here in NY, I strongly believe, that outcomes of this Forum will highly contribute to further strengthening of regional and global cooperation, supporting SDGs through Science, Technology and Innovation and expanding partnerships in order to ensure security and sustainable development of our countries.

Thank you for your attention