

Draft Statement by H.E. Mr. Peter Hanke, Federal Minister for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure of the Republic of Austria

Madam Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to join you today to discuss how we can increase international cooperation and connect our science, technology and innovation efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to start by thanking all speakers for their insightful remarks. Your interventions have shown that investing in science and digital infrastructure is the key to unlocking economic opportunity, saving the environment and connecting humanity. Roads and rails, cables and satellites, solar panels and wind turbines – they are the foundation for succeeding in the 21st century.

Science, technology and innovation help us find solutions to global challenges. Participation in scientific progress is not a privilege—it is a human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This right must guide our action as we shape the global STI agenda, with the clear goal to close the digital divide.

How do we get there? In Austria, we have seen how public investment in digital and research infrastructure, combined with open-access policies and multi-stakeholder partnerships, can create inclusive innovation ecosystems. This approach also drives scientific excellence and social cooperation. Having listened to today's discussion, I see three core takeaways:

First of all, we must treat digital infrastructure such as broadband, data platforms and AI systems as global public goods. Fair access to this infrastructure is essential. The Global Digital Compact offers new opportunities to make this happen.

Second, we need to expand support for open-access knowledge platforms and online science hubs. These are bridges between disciplines, countries, and communities. Innovative financing models and public-private partnerships can help to scale up these efforts.

Third, we must integrate digital and science investments into broader development strategies. The City of Vienna, for example, integrates STI infrastructure into its urban innovation agenda, linking universities, start-ups and public services. This model has increased our resilience, supported green transition and attracted international cooperation.

In closing, I would like to highlight that capacity-building, digital inclusion and international scientific collaboration must go hand in hand. With targeted investments and collective actions, we can leverage STI to fully serve the SDGs for everyone and everywhere, so nobody is left behind.

In this context, Austria will also participate in the upcoming Financing for Development Conference in Sevilla next month.

Thank you for your participation and attention!