

Statement of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group  
Briefing for Member States and Stakeholders on the preparations of the  
11th Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation  
for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum)

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As presented

Thank you, Excellencies.

I address you on behalf of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group (STC MG), co-organized by the International Science Council (ISC) and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO). We bring together hundreds of scientific and engineering organizations representing millions of scientists and engineers across all disciplines and world regions, representing the diverse global engineering and scientific expertise needed for sustainable development.

The STC MG is one of the nine original major groups that go back to the Rio Conference in 1992. Following the approval of Agenda 2030 in 2015, the STC MG has supported the SDGs in a variety of ways including side and special events at the STI Forum and the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, reviews of the Global Sustainable Development Reports, research guides, sectoral papers, paragraph 89 reports, and more recently assisting in organizing action segments at the Partnership Forums. This year the STC MG with the Business and Industry Major Group supported UNIDO in organizing the action segment on SDG 9, last year UNEP on SDG 14 and in 2024 FAO on SDG 3. We look forward to

working with the co organizers and DESA staff on this year's STI Forum. Our preference would be to take the lead on a special event as we did in 2023 and 2024.

The next four years are critical for Agenda 2030 and bridging technologies employed broadly can help achieve the goals. We continue to believe as I am sure you do that STI applied ethically and in ways respectful of human rights can accelerate progress on Agenda 2030. However, the discussions of STI for the SDGs are siloed and we believe it is essential to better communicate the role and value of STI for the SDGs to member states and all stakeholders. The STC MG is an active member of the MGoS Coordinating Mechanism and we will continue to communicate to our colleagues the importance of STI for the SDGs.

The discussions of STI for the SDGs especially at the STI Forum need to emphasize the integrated nature of the SDGs and the need for a systems approach. If we are assigned a special event, we would again engage as many of our MGoS colleagues as possible and focus this year on integrated and accelerated approaches to SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 - specifically essential services SDG targets. A sustainable and resilient city (SDG 11) depends on sustainable and resilient water (SDG 6), energy (SDG 7), and infrastructure systems (SDG 9). Bridging systems using existing technologies must be planned and deployed now to provide essential services for all. The permanent systems that replace the bridging systems must not only be financed and built but they must also be operated and maintained for sustainability and resilience over their entire life cycle; see

e.g. UN DESA "Managing Infrastructure Assets for Sustainable Development".<sup>1</sup> Member states committed to this goal in Seville.<sup>2</sup>

We appreciate the excitement around AI and gen AI more specifically for accelerating progress on the SDGs. We also believe AI has the potential to greatly improve UN processes for bringing timely information to the HLPF leading to more robust and impactful Ministerial Declarations. Currently, much of the valuable information that is collected from UN entities and stakeholders during the annual cycle never reaches the HLPF in a timely and usable form. We believe AI can help today and will continue to improve over the next years and the UN must leverage it.

AI is more than gen AI and is already playing an enabling role in all the SDGs but it is also creating demand for additional infrastructure especially energy, water, and digital infrastructure systems. We believe it would be helpful for this year's review to emphasize the role and impact that digital and AI is already having on SDG 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17. This should be done with concrete examples. Stakeholder concerns over AI threats are legitimate and it is important that the STI community work together to build trust with all stakeholders that all advanced and emerging technologies including AI will be used in ways that are ethical and respect human rights.

Thank you for your attention.

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<sup>1</sup> UN DESA Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals through Infrastructure Management <https://financing.desa.un.org/IAM>

<sup>2</sup> Sevilla Commitment <https://financing.desa.un.org/ffd4/outcome>

