REBUILDING BETTER WITH STI DURING COVID-19: LEVERAGING THE TECHNOLOGY FACILITATION MECHANISM
Launch of the Online Technology Platform – 2030 Connect

Co-organized by DESA, UNCTAD and OICT

Concept Note

1. Introduction

Member States created the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) through the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in July 2015, and launched it as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. The TFM aims to mobilize science, technology and innovation (STI) on behalf of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation. The TFM, as designed by the Member States, has several components, including a UN-wide Inter-Agency Task Team currently comprising 43 agencies, as well as an online platform to facilitate access to STI for the SDGs (for more details, see https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/tfm#un).

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DESA/DSDG) has been leading the implementation of the TFM, including through co-convening the IATT (currently with UNCTAD) since its inception. In partnership with the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT), and with the support of IATT members as well as other entities, DESA/DSDG has also developed 2030 Connect, as the online platform envisaged under the TFM.

Following a mandated independent technical assessment, DESA/DSDG and OICT collaborated to organize a global design competition for 2030 Connect. This was followed by the creation of a demo version of the platform, connecting to the networks of a number of IATT and other partners.

The demo version of the 2030 Connect was presented at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York in July 2018.

The platform has now moved beyond the demo version and connects not just to technology databases but also to open access knowledge resources, proven low-cost innovations for the SDGs and technology solutions for COVID-19. Development to date has been possible through extra-budgetary resources mobilized through a project on 'Mobilizing STI in developing countries for the SDGs', funded from the '2030 Agenda sub-fund of the Peace and Development Trust Fund.'

Subject to the availability of resources, it is in the process of being expanded further, with complementary support being visualized for developing countries to make the most of these services.

Over this time period, accelerating technological change and open-science also stand to revolutionize how we can 'build back better.' Both are the subject of discussion and action within the TFM.

Accelerating technological change creates an unprecedented challenge for policymakers confronted with the need to harness STI for sustainable development. The constant reconfiguration of knowledge, technologies, actors, initiatives, the emergence of entirely new threats and challenges but also the multitude of solutions emerging from a proliferation of global, regional and local networks make it necessary to create tools that all countries can use to understand how technological change is relevant for their own development and assess its economic and social benefits, consequences and feedbacks, leading to better informed policy making and multi-stakeholder engagement.

'Open science' represents yet another revolution – this time in traditional models of scientific publication and knowledge dissemination, with the potential of connecting scientists and researchers from across the world -especially in developing countries that traditionally face barriers - to the latest frontiers. The potential of open science to speed up research and discovery is evident during the pandemic, but – as in the case of emerging technologies – stakeholders need to understand its relevance, benefits and pitfalls in order to make better decisions.

2. Objectives

Against this background, this event during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2020 will launch the Online Technology Platform – 2030 Connect in the context of the TFM and COVID-19. It will be a new starting point for feedback and support, discussing key challenges and opportunities towards the full operationalization of the Platform in the next phase.

The event will also enable a discussion about how 2030 Connect, the TFM and the UN more generally can contribute to launching and supporting an inclusive international policy dialogue through which national policymakers in developed and developing countries can make sense of rapid technological change and direct it towards the common good, including also around the management of open science.

3. **Organizers**

The event is organized by UNDESA, UNCTAD and OICT, with support of other members of the UN Inter-agency Task Team on STI for the SDGs, and other network members.

4. **Participants**

The event will be open to participation through a registration process, and will bring together representatives of governments, partner organizations and other stakeholders.

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Programme

Pre-session (9:00-9:30) Welcome check-in and technical guidance on the virtual meeting

Opening, moderated by: Ms. Stephanie Rambler, Sustainable Development Officer and Project Manager, 2030 Connect, DESA/DSDG (2 min)
Keynote remarks by Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (5 minutes)
Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary General, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (5 minutes)
Close of opening session, subsequent programme moderated by: Mr. Wei Liu, Sustainable Development Officer and UN IATT Coordinator, DESA/DSDG (2 min)
Mr. Dinh-Huy Banh, Director of the Enterprise Solutions Service, Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT), the United Nations (3 minutes)
Ms. Ola Zahran, Head, Coordination Office in New York, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) (3 minutes)
Ms Peggy Oti-boateng, Director of Science Policy and Capacity-Building, UNESCO (3 minutes)
Presentation of the features of the 2030 Connect Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee, Chief Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, DESA/DSDG (4 minutes)
Interactive dialogue with Member States and other stakeholders (2 minutes each)

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- Ms. H. Elizabeth Thompson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations, former Co-Chair of the STI Forum (2 minutes)
- Mr. Juan Sandoval, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations Mexico, Vice President of ECOSOC, former Co-Chair of STI Forum (2 minutes)
- Mr. Daniel O. Okaiteye, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations (2 minutes)
- Other Member-State representative (2 minutes)
- Mr. Alessandro Marcello, Group Leader, Molecular Virology, International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (2 minutes)
- Ms. Natalia Manola, Research Associate, "Athena" Research and Innovation Center, University of Athens; OpenAIRE (2 minutes)
- Ms. Xiaolan Fu, Founding Director of the Technology and Management Centre for Development (TMCD), Professor of Technology and International Development, Oxford, former member of the 10 Member Group of the TFM, and member of the Governing Council of the UN's Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries (2 minutes)
- Other interventions/Q&A

Closing and next steps by moderator (2 min)