

STI Forum, 6-7 June 201
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Ladies and gentlemen, Colleagues,

Introduction

The 10-Member Group that was appointed to support the development and operations of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM), met for the first time just 3 months ago. It shouldn't surprise you to learn that we all came to – and left – that meeting with slightly different views about the exact focus and priorities of the Mechanism and its multi-stakeholder STI Forum. Yet we shared a sense of **the unique challenges and opportunities posed by the establishment of the TFM for the role that science, technology and innovation can and now must play in shaping the future of humanity on planet Earth** – and that sense has been clearly confirmed by your discussions during the last two days.

This really takes us back to understanding the transformative nature of the SDG framework itself, of what our colleague, Professor Nakicenovic, yesterday emphasised as the disruptive potential of the 2030 global agenda – an agenda that challenges and, if implemented successfully, will profoundly disrupt our socio-economic, political and cultural systems and the unsustainable practices and behaviours, attitudes and values that underlie them.

Within that broader understanding of the SDG framework, the role of the TFM must be to challenge and to change STI systems – to increase their orientation towards the 2030 agenda, their connectivity to the priority needs of policy and practice, their capacities at all levels to contribute effective, equitable solutions to the many and complex challenges of sustainable development. And what we now increasingly recognise – and, again, this has been evident throughout our discussions during this Forum – is that those changes **call for a deeper, transformative shift in the ethos that shapes how we practice and value STI; a shift that moves us increasingly from practices of competition to those of collaboration**

- Across national, regional borders
- Within and across communities of science, technology and innovation practitioners,

- Across sectors and stakeholder communities, bringing together different types of knowledge (scientific, practitioner-based, activist, indigenous, etc.)

We have increasing evidence of this transformation being underway: most notably in the emerging international discourse on open science and open knowledge, with its emphasis on the need for

- S&T to work with rather than for society – and, specifically, with knowledge partners (decision makers, policy shapers, the private sector, and citizens) in the co-design and co-production of solutions-oriented knowledge
- policies of open data and open access to publications to secure and drive the practice of S&T as a public enterprise for the global public good

At the same time, we must recognise and confront persistent pressures to play by business as usual rules:

- At the individual level: Yesterday the issue of quantitative metrics for valuing excellence and determining career advancement was raised – a system which does not make it interesting in terms of career advancement for researchers to collaborate with colleagues from other fields or disciplines, let alone with society, to share their data, etc.
- At the organisational level: Think about the system of university rankings and the competitive behaviour that stimulates between institutions of higher education
- At the policy level:
 - In terms of national policies: the extent to which many national STI policies continue to emphasise the benefits of STI for national (economic) competitiveness, which is important, yet excludes consideration of the benefits of STI for a sustainable and just world
 - At the international level: the extent to which the “STI-for-SDG” space itself is a fragmented and often competitive space

The role/function of the STI Forum: Looking towards the future

Given this tension, or disconnect, between the imperative of collaboration and the reality of persistent competition, there is a clear role for the Forum and that is to be

a platform for the STI community and its full diversity of stakeholders to jointly create the conditions of possibility for transformative, solutions-oriented STI, by fostering international coordination and multi-stakeholder collaboration and, where necessary, providing support to manage the disruptions to STI policy and practice this will inevitably generate.

Given the urgency of the sustainable development challenges that confront us, it is also clear that **the Forum must be action-oriented and cumulative in its impacts.**

In response to the Co-Chair's challenge this morning, you have given us some valuable ideas about what this might mean in practice.

I think we have all agreed that **the Forum cannot be an annual 2-day discussion. Instead it should be the outcome of an annual programme of results-oriented work and, as part of a series, a regular moment for collaboratively defining the priorities for the next year's programme of work.**

The work programme itself should address a number of **concrete objectives**, such as:

- Monitoring and sharing trends in the deployment of STI for SDGs
- Showcasing specific solutions and achievements – e.g., social and technological innovations, the development of national policy roadmaps, multilateral STI resource mobilisation, etc.
- Collecting, coordinating and making available state-of-the-art expertise on specific issues or practice areas – e.g., STI training and education, capacity building and mobilisation, science advice, the development and diffusion of inclusive, transformational technologies, technology assessment, open data/digital platforms, etc.
- Identifying emerging priorities and critical knowledge and innovation gaps, and agreeing on partnerships and modalities for effectively addressing these
- Identifying neglected SDGs and targets and agreeing on ways of stimulating STI responses to these
- Continuing to build the STI-for-SDGs community of collaborators, including UN initiatives, and providing effective matchmaking opportunities

The 10-Member Group will be working with the IATT to further refine these objectives, and to develop appropriate and concrete actions aimed at addressing them. Such actions could include:

- Working with specialised agencies/groupings (e.g., UNESCO and networks of S&T observatories) to report on STI-for-SDG trends and to develop TFM success indicators
- Undertaking horizon scanning activities
- Convening targeted stakeholder meetings (e.g., of diverse STI funders (national research councils, foundations, donor agencies, etc.), of university leaders, of S&T and finance ministers, etc.
- Commissioning expert analyses and/or best practice guidelines
- Mapping and networking relevant international STI initiatives and actor groupings
- Developing the TFM Online Platform – with the ambition of having a proposal available for your consideration and input at the 2017 Forum.

We will also need to

- Identify and engage the partners that we will need to work with on these types of activities – and we note with gratitude the offers and expressions of interest that have been made by many of you in this regard
- Reflect, also on the basis of your useful suggestions, on the Forum format and venue, including its possible roll out at regional level, in order to maximise its inclusive, creative and collaborative potential

And last but by no means least: we will need to create clarity about the longer-term outcome we want to achieve as a result of all this work. What positive difference do we want to see in the world of STI – and ultimately in the lives of ordinary people – as a result of the TFM and STI Forum? And how will we measure and monitor the difference we seek to make?

In addressing these questions of longer-term impact, we should be bold in the vision we set. And we should remain absolutely vigilante about ensuring – through effective STI communication, outreach and public engagement action – that our work remains what the Secretary General yesterday referred to as “a peoples’ initiative that speaks to a peoples’ agenda”.

Conclusion

This Forum has given us a taste of the need and mood for collaboration, a sense of what is possible, a glimpse of what we could accomplish in the years ahead. The 10-Member Group thanks all of you for your active engagement, your ideas and your commitment, which we will continue to count on.

We thank the IATT for its work in getting us to this important point, and the Forum Co-chairs for their leadership during the last two days.