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**Statement by**

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**The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.**

**Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission**  
**Opening Session**  
**Geneva, 20-24 April 2015**  
**Room XXVI, Palais des Nations**

**Statement by Ms. Anne Miroux**  
**Director, Division on Technology and Logistics**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to address the seventh session of the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission, and to share with you some of our thoughts on the role of STI in development, and on some policy-related aspects, including in view of the specific session that will be organized on science, technology and innovation (STI) during the course of this meeting of the Commission.

STI fosters structural change in economies and enables countries to integrate effectively with the global economy. It will play an important role in achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and will also be a key part of the means of implementing them. This critical role of STI in addressing global challenges and transforming national economies is becoming increasingly visible, particularly as a key component of the post-2015 development framework. The Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda, the Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, and the zero draft of the Addis Ababa Accord on Financing for Development all provide ample space on technology and innovation issues.

As you know, since quite a long time, UNCTAD has been working on various important topics related to policies that harness STI for sustainable growth and development. In the past two years, these have included the financing of innovation and inclusive innovation. This year, the focus of the session is on promoting collaboration in STI among the key actors in innovation systems and the role of STI parks as instruments to catalyse such collaboration.

I would like to complement the remarks made by the Deputy Secretary-General in his opening speech with some additional observations on recent trends and policies related to STI for development. UNCTAD has prepared a note on the promotion of collaboration between key actors of the innovation system, and on the role of STI parks as a catalyst in that respect (TD/B/C.II/30). This note presents some considerations on various factors that affect the performance of STI parks as instruments to promote innovation in developing countries, together with some case studies.

Innovation generally does not take place by a firm in isolation, but is created in systems or networks, also known as innovation systems, which include a multitude of actors such as other firms, universities and research institutes, and public agencies, among others. A key policy area for strengthening innovation systems is to promote collaboration among these actors. STI parks are one common policy instrument to foster such collaboration. They are specialized clusters that co-locate knowledge sources, such as universities, colleges and research organizations in the vicinity of firms, in order to promote knowledge and technology flows and collaboration. The purpose of the session on STI, which will take place under Item 5(b) on Wednesday afternoon, is to discuss the experience of various STI parks around the world, and the factors that determine their effectiveness. I encourage you to share country experiences towards identifying success factors and good practices in establishing and managing STI parks.

I also take this opportunity to provide you with an update on UNCTAD's work on information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development, an increasingly important segment of technologies within the realm of STI. The UNCTAD Week on E-commerce last March presented a unique opportunity for member States and other stakeholders to examine potential opportunities and risks of e-commerce, and discuss how to reap benefits from this phenomenon in the Information Society. The week started with a capacity-building workshop for 15 ECOWAS countries on the topic of regional cyberlaw harmonization. This was followed by the official launch of the Information Economy Report 2015, which focuses on the potential for electronic commerce to contribute to development. The week ended with a very well attended three-day Expert Meeting on Cyberlaws and E-commerce. The report of the expert meeting has been made available (TD/B/C.II/EM.5/3), and will be discussed under Item 3 Wednesday afternoon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now turn to another important aspect of our work in STI for development, namely the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), which provides important opportunities for cross-fertilization with this Commission. As you know, UNCTAD serves as the secretariat of the CSTD, and two weeks from now, we will host the eighteenth session of the CSTD, which will address two priority themes that are particularly relevant to UNCTAD's current debates in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

a) The first priority theme of the upcoming CSTD session is “Strategic foresight for the post-2015 development agenda”. Strategic foresight consists of studying and evaluating future trends in global development, and especially new technologies, together with their potential social, environmental and economic impacts, to help policymakers and all stakeholders improve their related decisions. It is increasingly being used by countries and regions to identify technology trends and analyse their societal impact, and to better understand unsustainable trends and adjust resource allocation. At its forthcoming session, the CSTD will consider, inter alia, using foresight at regular intervals as a process to encourage a debate among government, academia, civil society and the private sector on the implications of technological changes and innovation. For example, according to the analysis shared by one of the experts who participated in the last panel meeting of the CSTD on this theme (in November 2014), 47 per cent of total employment in the United States is under the "high risk" category (meaning that associated occupations are potentially automatable over the next ten to twenty years)<sup>1</sup>. A substantial upgrading of skills or in any event new perspectives in this domain would therefore be necessary in the future to prepare for the emergence of new industries. Hence, the question of how to prepare the workforce for these changes, and which skills and talents to develop becomes a key issue.

b) The second priority theme of the CSTD session is “Digital development”, which follows up on the ICT priority themes of previous sessions. Discussions on digital development closely link ICTs with the emerging Post-2015 Development Agenda, covering the profound changes that the digital development landscape has been undergoing in terms of emerging technologies, and what they mean for demographics and development priorities. These changes call for a re-evaluation of how we perceive the interaction between ICT and development. Under this theme, delegates will also consider new ICTs that have transformative impacts on economies, ways to address the digital divide through education, and ensuring ICT policy coherence and effectiveness.

c) The forthcoming CSTD session is also of particular importance to the Commission's mandate on the overall follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). This year, ten years have passed since the conclusion of the WSIS Summit, which was held in two phases, in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005. Following its mandate, the CSTD has been entrusted by the ECOSOC to conduct a ten-year review of progress made in the achievement of the Summit outcomes at its forthcoming eighteenth session.

To assist the Commission in this crucial task, the secretariat has prepared a report on "Implementing WSIS Outcomes: A Ten-year Review", which will be presented at the session. The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation in the main areas of WSIS outcomes, namely the vision concerning the Information Society, the WSIS Targets and the Action Lines, financial mechanisms, Internet governance and multistakeholder

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, The future of employment: how susceptible are jobs to computerisation, September 17, 2013, [http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The\\_Future\\_of\\_Employment.pdf](http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The_Future_of_Employment.pdf)

implementation and cooperation. In practice, the CSTD session will feature a ministerial round table and a full-day substantive discussion on the ten-year review. The outcome of the CSTD's review will be submitted, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly later this year. It will form a substantive input to the overall review of WSIS which the General-Assembly will conduct in the form of a two-day high level event in December.

I am excited about this landmark opportunity that the CSTD has to assess all areas of WSIS implementation over the past ten years, to point out the achievements as well as the challenges that still persist, and to make possible recommendations for future priorities and action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the last year, we have continued to implement the programme of work of national science, technology and innovation policy (STIP) reviews, focusing on Asian countries with funding from the development account. Following the review of Oman, we completed the STIP review of Thailand in 2014, which will be formally presented at the upcoming CSTD session by H.E. Pichet Durongkaveroj, Minister of Science and Technology of Thailand. A number of strategic STI policy decisions have been taken very recently in Thailand to support their technological capabilities towards avoiding the middle-income trap.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to share with you our assessment of the work of the multiyear expert meeting that has been dealing jointly with the issues of enterprise development and technology. In our view, the exchanges opened new perspectives into various aspects of technology and innovation policy, some of which have also informed our work. For example, the discussion on technology transfer provided many practical and action-oriented suggestions that were incorporated into relevant reports that we published last year. The discussions on financing of innovation, business-academia collaboration and building innovation systems in developing countries were also very rich in content and strengthened the secretariat's analytical and technical cooperation work, which we hope will feed into the future programme of work on STI policies.

I would like to remind you that this Friday, under agenda item 6, the Commission will have the opportunity to discuss in detail the work undertaken by UNCTAD in the area of science, technology and innovation under its three pillars: research and analysis, consensus-building, and technical assistance. I welcome the opportunity of reporting to you on this agenda item on Friday.

I would like to conclude my words by once again expressing our gratitude to our donors for their continued support for our activities in the field of STI, and wish you a fruitful discussion throughout the week.

Thank you.