United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

20th Annual Session 8-12 May 2017

High-level Roundtable on '*Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges*'

Concept Note

During the twentieth annual session of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), a High-level Roundtable will be held on the morning of 8 May 2017, with the theme of *Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges*. The Commission will contribute to the High-Level Roundtable of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) convened in July 2017 which will explore the aforementioned theme and conduct an in-depth review of the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG1 (no poverty), SDG2 (zero hunger), SDG3 (good health and well-being), SDG5 (gender equality), SDG9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), SDG14 (life below water), and SDG17 (partnership for the goals).

In order to make a concrete contribution to the ECOSOC deliberations, the Commission has decided to focus on SDG2 (zero hunger) and the role of STI in achieving food security by 2030. In this respect, the Commission will identify key capacity gaps and address ways and means to prioritize science, technology, and innovation (STI) issues as part of national development strategies to achieve food security in particular and the SDGs more broadly.

About 795 million people, or every ninth person, are undernourished, with the majority living in developing countries and rural areas. Climate change, access to land and water, soil degradation and desertification, changes in dietary patterns, expanding populations, and low or slowing productivity growth pose challenges to global food security and achievement of SDG 2 on "Zero Hunger."

STI can play a critical role in achieving food security by 2030. Achieving "zero hunger" by 2030 will require new and existing applications of STI across the food system, addressing all dimensions of food security. However, harnessing the potential of such technologies for food security requires investments in research and development, human capital, infrastructure, and knowledge flows. Agricultural innovation also calls for an enabling environment, gender-sensitive approaches to technology development and dissemination, and regional and international collaboration. Technology foresight and assessment for agricultural innovations are also key elements of policies to harness STI for sustainable development.

The Roundtable will provide an opportunity for high-level policymakers to exchange experiences, lessons learned and best practices, and to discuss challenges faced at the national level.

The following are questions to guide the discussion:

- From your perspective, what are urgent actions needed to ensure food security by 2030?
- Which new scientific, technological and innovative applications - including information and communication technologies (ICTs) and big data - should be a priority in terms of their potential for achieving food security by 2030? Specifically,

how can the international community support access to scientific and technical applications and data for improving food security?

- How can we broaden the STI policy framework to promote social inclusion and environmental sustainability? How can we apply a gender-sensitive lens to STI policymaking processes? How can STI be adapted to local socio-economic, climatic, and geographic conditions and engage with indigenous knowledge?

- How can technology assessment and foresight help countries evaluate the prospective benefits and risks of new, emerging, and converging technologies, especially in the context of food security? What roles can national government and regional and international institutions play in this respect?

- From your perspective, what are the actions that the international community, including the CSTD, can take to leverage STI for food security in the context of the SDGs?

Format of the High-level Roundtable:

Following a brief introduction by the moderator high-level participants will make their initial interventions (5-8 minutes), broadly addressing the guiding questions. After this the moderator will initiate an interactive discussion among the participants, including those from the floor.