**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
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**High-level roundtable on "Progress made in the implementation of and
follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes
at the regional and international levels"**

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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)

20th Annual Session 8-12 May 2017

High level Roundtable on "Review of progress made in the implementation of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes"

The Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my privilege to be part of this gathering comprising of eminent dignitaries, professionals and scientific community for round table discussion on "Review of progress made in the implementation of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes" for 20th Session of CSTD.

I place my gratitude to give the opportunity to express Sri Lanka's view in this session and this is the opportune time to interact with dignitaries from science, technology and innovation fields. Specially in ICT sector.

Sri Lanka understands, ST&I play a crucial role for socio economic growth of the country. We are the signatories of various UN and international agreements and committed to achieve sustainable development goals at least by 2030. So that, we know appropriate measures and mechanisms ought to be taken further strengthening of conducive environment to capture national and international investments on ST&I to move forward. Thus, the country has given its consideration on developing enabling environment for innovation and technology eco system to achieve the vision.

In this circumstances, we know,

~~Besides~~, ICT technologies are a great leveler and Sri Lanka today witness the widespread use of advanced ICT services. There is a need however to channel the users to deploy these more positively with the objective of social and economic advancement.

Hence, I would like to point out some of the interventions happened in the fields of science technology and innovation ~~especially~~ in ICT. sector in Sri Lanka.

The ministry of Science, Technology and Research by developing the Sri Lanka Innovation Dashboard ~~we have brought~~ ^provide a platform to bring.^ all actors of the innovation eco system to connect to one another. The process is now on going and this product won the 1st prize in National Software Awards last year in the Government / Open Data category. The emergence of the dashboard has brought data which were previously perhaps took years to emerge as documents to come into the open in real time. The challenge of getting everybody to join in still remains. ^For this now,^ Sri Lanka has today passed the RTI legislation and this too is changing the way public institutions work.

One of our research institution engaged in setting up drought monitoring system and earth observation infrastructure and application facilities with the support of UN agency which facilitate information dissemination and decision making process. ^to different sector of our country.^ Considering Sri Lanka is well connected with mobile penetration extremely high the idea is to provide advanced information enabling better planning.

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With regard to the policy framework,

Sri Lanka is yet to have a National Innovation Policy, Also in the development

stages is the Spatial Data Policy. However, The coordinating framework developed for

ensuring coordination between different ministries and organizations which

include both private and public has been developed based on tripe bottom

line concept and therefore include social inclusion and environmental

sustainability. As the engagement is carried out through a virtual platform all

have the opportunity to participate and contribute and some of the traditional

communication bottlenecks have been removed.

As the policy makers are now more and more turning into valuing innovative

approaches there is the interest in promoting local innovation networks.

With a rich heritage indigenous knowledge is always valued and currently the

national policy on indigenous knowledge is being worked out with the

support of World Intellectual Property Organization.

UNDP Sri Lanka last year carried out the first national foresight conference where the Ministry of Science Technology and Research partnered. An outcome of this event is the establishment of a Social Innovation laboratory which is expected to be developed within the ministry. This lab will support dynamic citizen engagement and will enable better decision making and implementation as 360 analysis of proposed programs will be carried out prior to launching. Again by taking issues at ground level the lab will work towards providing innovative solutions. Use of ICT tools will enable the engagement of a wider community in seeking opinions and advise and should provide grounds for better decision making at the end. The foresight exercises in food security should provide interesting outputs for decision makers too.

As far as advance science and technologies concern applications are very important that continuously updating globally. Sri Lanka has good and updated ICT infrastructure facilities and also shows good progress in networking Readiness index. Our index is 63.

However, the existing ICT based infrastructure in terms of data and information sharing is very limited compare to the developed world. High investment cost as well as inadequate human capacity to develop the data flow to make decision is one of the main areas of concern in this regard. Regional disparity in accessing scientific knowledge and information is also high. Therefore, international community may support for infrastructure development to create a platform for scientific data sharing and for awareness across the Island.

International funding organizations should consider supporting innovation networks both at national and local levels. There should be the interest in supporting such networks to be developed and nurtured by the funders. Exposing decision makers at local level to international best practices should be one way of ensuring action.

Thank You.