

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twentieth session
Geneva, 8-12 May 2017**

**Opening Ceremony
Item 1: Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters**

Statement submitted by

H.E. Ambassador Frederick Makamure Masiwa Shave
President of ECOSOC

Monday, 8 May 2017

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Remarks at the Opening Segment (CSTD20)

H.E Ambassador Frederick Makamure Shava

President of the Economic and Social Council

Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As President of ECOSOC I am very pleased to address you in the opening ceremony of the twentieth session of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), one of our functional commissions.

As the torch-bearer for science, technology and innovation in the United Nations, the role of the CSTD has become all the more critical and urgent as the international community sets out to achieve the 2030 Development Agenda with the principle of "leaving no one behind."

Science, technology, and innovation are critical for the achievement of such ambitious, interlinked Goals. New ways of thinking about development that harness the potential of science, technology, and innovation are required not only to address our most pressing global challenges but also to take advantage of new and unprecedented opportunities to create the world we want.

As ECOSOC President, it is clear to me that the social and economic dimensions of development are increasingly intertwined with new, emerging, and converging applications of science, technology, and innovation.

Technology is perhaps the most powerful driver of the fast and profound social and economic changes that our world is confronted with and that the UN and ECOSOC in particular needs to make sense of, in order to develop common frameworks for cooperation and joint, fair progress.

For example, the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development will be "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world."

One of the SDGs to be reviewed in depth this year is SDG2 to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. As you know, food and nutrition insecurity is both a key driver and consequence of poverty and is thus critical in our poverty eradication efforts.

Given that about 795 million people are undernourished, with the majority living in developing countries and rural areas, innovations in smallholder farming as well as larger-

scale agribusiness and agro-industry development represent a necessary pathway for sustainable and inclusive poverty eradication at scale in Africa. I am very pleased that the CSTD is exploring this issue as one of its priority themes this year.

In this context, I convened a Global Expert Meeting on Agriculture and Agro-industries Development Towards Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems, the 24th through the 26th of April in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

[ADD KEY FINDINGS FROM EXPERT MEETING]

Our discussions very much intersect with the work of this Commission to explore the role of science, technology, and innovation in addressing food security by 2030, including through scientific, technical, and innovative approaches for improving agricultural productivity, making food more accessible and nutritious, and promoting sustainable and climate-compatible agricultural practices.

Harnessing the potential of such technologies for food security requires investing in agricultural research and development, human capital, knowledge flows, and infrastructure, among other factors.

For many who have escaped food insecurity or poverty, progress has often been temporary or fleeting. The development of broad productive capacity, and diversification - particularly from sustainable industrialization and infrastructure development - are critical drivers for sustained development progress and are among my top priorities as ECOSOC President, especially to support development in Africa and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Through your work this year on food security and new innovation approaches for achieving the SDGs, it is clear that the CSTD also understands the critical importance of infrastructure development for eradicating poverty, creating economic opportunities, and combating hunger and undernutrition.

In agriculture, support for infrastructure development translates into more people having affordable access to improved water sources as a means to increase the percentage of arable land equipped for irrigation.

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all is also important for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining agricultural productivity.

Inclusive, resilient and sustainable development within cities may help build up local markets, provide a means for people to travel to nearby markets to buy agricultural goods and open up new export and import markets.

And information and communication technologies have a critical role to play in making extension services more accessible and developing innovative financial instruments for insurance and risk prevention.

Given the ambitious goal of achieving zero hunger by 2030 and the new infrastructure developments, innovation approaches, and scientific applications that can enable its realization, it is important that such a timely discussion is happening at the Twentieth Session of the CSTD.

Because of the important contribution infrastructure development makes not only for agriculture but the sustainable development agenda more broadly, I have convened a series of meetings on "Innovations for Infrastructure Development and promoting Sustainable Industrialization."

[ADD KEY FINDINGS FROM EXPERT/SPECIAL MEETING(S)]

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you can see, addressing the issues at the heart of the ECOSOC agenda require a deep understanding of how science, technology, and innovation can effectively play their role as key means of implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda.

The ECOSOC - and the United Nations - were created over seventy years ago with the conviction that global peace could only be sustained if accompanied by efforts to advance the development of all peoples across the globe.

If we are to remain faithful to that vision while being relevant in the present moment, it is absolutely critical that the CSTD help the UN system and the broader international development architecture understand how the increasing convergence, sophistication, and reach of technology can support the Sustainable Development Agenda.

I look forward to a rich discussion in this session, and I am confident that your deliberations this week will make a key contribution to the High-Level Political Forum and the ECOSOC theme this year.

Thank you.

