

**United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)  
Twenty-sixth Annual Session**

**High-level panel on  
“Ensuring safe water and sanitation for all:  
A solution through science, technology and innovation.”**

**Tuesday, 28 March 2023, 10.00-13.00 (Geneva time)  
Geneva and online**

**Concept note**

**Background**

In spite of some progress made so far, current trends in access to water and sanitation provide cause for concern about the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal on water and sanitation (SDG 6). There is an urgent need to devise solutions that accelerate progress and ensure that no one is left behind.

Nearly every other SDG relies in some way on the achievement of SDG 6. Together with good hygiene practices, for instance, it is essential for the achievement of good health and well-being (SDG 3) and gender equality (SDG 5), as well as eliminating poverty (SDG 1) and reducing inequalities (SDG 10). As a determinant of success in areas including agriculture, energy, and disaster resilience, it has vast and consistently underestimated socio-economic impacts.

While factors including better policies and governance, increased funding, improved infrastructure, and increased data availability for better decision-making are central to resolving water and sanitation issues, there is no doubt that Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) can play a particularly significant role. STI can contribute to overcoming the persistent challenges in delivering SDG 6 by improving the distribution and delivery of safe water and sanitation, providing integrated water resource management, harnessing the potential of frontier technologies, and addressing inequalities in the sector, notably in relation to gender.

**Objective**

The high-level panel aims to discuss national and international experiences and identify strategies to deploy and scale up science, technology and innovation in ensuring safe water and sanitation for all.

## **Guiding questions for discussion**

- What examples of STI solutions that work can be proposed for dissemination to help ensure safe water and sanitation for all?
- How can we scale up the implementation of good STI solutions, including financing solutions, towards progress in achieving SDG 6?
- What is the role of international cooperation in promoting the development and use of STI solutions to ensure safe water and sanitation for all?

## **Format of the high-level panel**

The panel, in hybrid format, will begin with the introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General by the CSTD secretariat. Then panelists will make their presentations (maximum 15 minutes each). This will be followed by an interactive discussion among panelists and the participants, including those participating remotely. Priority will be given to intervention from participants in the meeting room (maximum 10 minutes each) and to high-level participants intervening remotely (7 minutes each). Online intervention with interpretation is subject to a 30-minute accumulative limit per session.

## **Supporting documents**

- Report of the Secretary-General: Ensuring Safe Water and Sanitation for All: A Solution by Science, Technology, and Innovation (E/CN.16/2023/3), available at [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ecn162023d3\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ecn162023d3_en.pdf)
- Current studies on Ensuring Safe Water and Sanitation for All: A Solution through Science, Technology and Innovation, available at <https://unctad.org/publication/ensuring-safe-water-and-sanitation-all-solution-through-science-technology-and>
- Other documents available on the website of the CSTD: <https://unctad.org/meeting/commission-science-and-technology-development-twenty-sixth-session>