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Contribution by Cameroon

to the CSTD 2023-2024 priority themes on "Data for Development" and "Global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for development"

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CONTRIBUTION FROM CAMEROON

PRIORITY THEME 1: Data for Development

1. **What are the major contributions and risks of data in relation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

Data plays a pivotal role in the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its major contributions lie in its ability to measure progress, inform decision-making, promote accountability, target interventions, and facilitate global cooperation. Data enables us to track advancements in critical areas, make informed policy decisions, hold governments and organizations accountable, allocate resources effectively, and foster international collaboration.

in Cameroon, data offers substantial contributions in various domains. For instance, the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) gathers and analyzes data to disseminate critical multi-layered information on the mobility, vulnerabilities, and needs of displaced and mobile populations. This initiative enables decision-makers and responders to provide context-specific assistance, thereby improving the lives of populations facing challenging situations, such as those affected by Boko Haram's activities in northern Cameroon.

We are implementing another project on Smart Water Monitoring and Alert with Rainfall Measurement from Telecommunications Networks which main objective is to test operationalization of a mobile-data driven system for monitoring rainfall and issuing real-time alerts in urban cities of the country.

Concerning SDG monitoring, Cameroon actively engages by regularly participating in the development of Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) for the SDGs. This initiative allows us to track national progress towards SDG attainment, identify areas requiring special attention, and take measures to address persistent challenges.

In the private sector, Cameroon plays a leading role as the president of the African Regional Partnership for Sustainability and SDG Reporting (ARP). This leadership position fosters collaboration for the development of enabling policies for sustainability reporting, thereby achieving data comparability regarding the private sector's contribution to the SDGs across the region. This initiative strengthens the private sector's commitment to the SDGs and promotes corporate social responsibility, significantly contributing to sustainable development goals in Cameroon and the wider region.

However, data also poses certain risks. Data gaps, privacy concerns, data quality issues, unequal access, and potential misuse are challenges that must be addressed. Incomplete or unreliable data can hinder progress monitoring, while privacy concerns must be balanced with the need for data collection. Ensuring data accuracy, accessibility, and responsible use is paramount.

To harness the power of data and mitigate risks, international cooperation, robust data governance, investments in data infrastructure, and data literacy initiatives are essential. Striking the right balance between leveraging data's potential and safeguarding its ethical and responsible use is key to successfully achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. How can developing countries benefit from the data revolution while considering risks?

Developing countries stand at the threshold of a significant opportunity, one that involves tapping into the potential of the data revolution while effectively managing the associated risks. To navigate this dual challenge successfully, it is essential to adopt a multifaceted approach that encompasses various strategies.

To begin, developing nations must prioritize building their data-related capabilities. This includes investing in comprehensive training programs and engaging in collaborations with international organizations. By doing so, they can enhance their proficiency in data collection, analysis, and interpretation, laying a strong foundation for leveraging data effectively.

Furthermore, the establishment of robust data infrastructure is crucial. This involves the improvement of data collection systems, data security measures, and the creation of clear protocols for data sharing. Here, international support and the integration of modern technology can significantly bolster a country's data infrastructure.

Collaboration, both at the national and international levels, plays a pivotal role. Developing countries can benefit immensely from sharing data, expertise, and best practices with their peers and international organizations. These collaborations foster a dynamic environment conducive to the development of comprehensive datasets and the generation of valuable insights.

Privacy concerns and ethical considerations should also be addressed effectively. Developing nations should enact data privacy regulations and ethical guidelines that strike a harmonious balance between data collection for development and the protection of personal information.

Maximizing the impact of data necessitates its seamless integration into the policymaking process. Encouraging data-driven decision-making at all levels of governance ensures that data not only informs but also drives policy formulation and program implementation.

Promotion of open data initiatives goes a long way in enhancing transparency and accountability. By making non-sensitive data publicly accessible, developing countries create an environment where transparency and informed decision-making can thrive.

Recognizing and addressing potential risks is crucial. Developing nations should establish robust risk management frameworks and invest in cybersecurity measures to mitigate data security breaches, misuse, and biases effectively.

Collaboration is further facilitated through partnerships with international organizations, non-governmental entities, academic institutions, and the private sector. These collaborations provide invaluable access to resources, expertise, and funding to support data-related initiatives and sustainable development.

Inclusive data collection methods are a prerequisite to ensure that marginalized communities are not left behind. This approach minimizes biases and ensures that development policies address the diverse needs of all citizens.

Clear data governance frameworks must be put in place, specifying roles, responsibilities, and standards for data management, sharing, and use.

To harness the benefits of the data revolution, it's essential to train technicians capable of harnessing the potential of new data sources. The data revolution entails new data sources that differ from traditional data. Therefore, collaborative frameworks need to be established with the owners of these new data sources, particularly private sector entities, as well as external stakeholders. Additionally, legal frameworks should be put in place to enable the utilization of these data while adhering to the fundamental principles of official statistics, including data provider confidentiality.

3. **What national and international policies and support measures can help address the challenges of the developing countries in the area of data relevant for sustainable development, including scientific and research purposes, data quality, data capabilities and data governance, while taking into account the multiple dimensions of data?**

Addressing the challenges faced by developing countries in the realm of data relevant for sustainable development, including scientific and research purposes, data quality, data capabilities, and data governance, requires a multifaceted approach encompassing both national and international policies and support measures. This

approach should be designed to accommodate the various dimensions of data, and ,
For National Policies:

Developing countries could formulate policies to enhance data capabilities through investments in regular education, training, and skill development. Furthermore, Governments can prioritize the development of robust data infrastructure, including the establishment of reliable data collection systems and data storage facilities.

National data governance policies should be created or strengthened, defining roles and responsibilities for data management, ensuring data security, and addressing ethical considerations.

We could also encourage the adoption of open data policies to make non-sensitive data publicly accessible, fostering transparency, and enabling research and innovation, and an important aspect would be to implement data privacy laws to safeguard individuals' rights and privacy, ensuring that data collection and sharing are conducted in a responsible and ethical manner.

Also, Public-Private Partnerships could oster collaboration between governments and the private sector to leverage resources, expertise, and technology for data-related initiatives.

As for International Support Measures, developed countries should support the development of global data standards, facilitate the sharing of data between countries, provide technical assistance to developing countries, and promote the use of data for sustainable development.

Besides, we should promote the adoption of common data standards and methodologies to improve data quality and comparability, and encourage the development of international data governance frameworks that respect the sovereignty of nations while ensuring responsible data management.

4. **In your country's view, what role could CSTD play in respect of data for development, including in the context of the Global Digital Compact?**

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) could play a number of roles in respect of data for development, including in the context of the Global Digital Compact.
CSTD could provide technical assistance and capacity building to developing countries to help them build their data collection and analysis capabilities. This could include providing training on data science and statistics, as well as helping countries to develop national data strategies.
The institution could also promote the use of open data by developing global data standards and facilitating the sharing of data between countries. This would make data

more accessible to researchers, policymakers, and the public, which would help to improve decision-making and drive innovation.

Moreover, it could help to protect the privacy of individuals by developing guidelines on the responsible use of data. This would help to ensure that data is used in a way that respects the rights of individuals and communities.

Besides, CSTD could advocate for the inclusion of developing countries in global data initiatives. This would ensure that the voices and needs of developing countries are heard and that they are able to benefit from the data revolution.

The Global Digital Compact is a new initiative that aims to promote the responsible use of digital technologies for sustainable development. The CSTD could play a key role in supporting the implementation of the Global Digital Compact by providing technical assistance, promoting the use of open data, and protecting the privacy of individuals.

In the context of the Global Digital Compact, the CSTD could also play a role in:

Fostering partnerships between developing countries and developed countries to share knowledge and resources.

Promoting the use of data to address the challenges of climate change and other global challenges.

Ensuring that the benefits of the data revolution are shared equitably, including by developing countries.

The CSTD is well-positioned to play a leading role in promoting the use of data for sustainable development. The Commission has a long history of working on issues related to science, technology, and development, and it has a strong network of experts and stakeholders. The CSTD can use its convening power and its expertise to help developing countries benefit from the data revolution and achieve the SDGs.

PRIORITY THEME 2: Global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for development

1. **What STI cooperative mechanism(s) at global or regional levels has your country joined in?**

Cameroon has actively engaged in various science, technology, and innovation (STI) cooperative mechanisms at both regional and global levels. These mechanisms reflect Cameroon's commitment to fostering international collaboration in the field of STI for sustainable development. Here are some of the STI cooperative mechanisms that Cameroon has participated in:
- CROPWATCH Initiative program
- Digital Transformation Acceleration Project (PATNuC) . The projects funded by the world Bank, aims to pursue reforms in the ICT sector, improve internet access and digital skills, promote the development of digital applications and services, improve digital inclusion, improve the scope and use of digital services, and encourage employment and entrepreneurship.

- CHAD-CAMEROON Interconnection Project (Pirect) The project aims to ensure the electrical interconnection between the Cameroonian and Chadian networks. Concretely, it is a question of building a high voltage line of 225 KW between the cities of Ngaoundéré and N'Djamena, while extending the electrical distribution network along this corridor.
- Deployment of environmental technologies and innovations for sustainable development and poverty reduction (PDTIE): The project aims to support an enabling and inclusive ecosystem for applied research and innovation in the DRC and Cameroon in the sustainable development sector by acting to strengthen and improve applied R&I capacity through:
  – Training of targeted scientists, technicians and engineers;
  – the provision of the necessary material and financial resources;
  – support for scientific and technical innovations in favor of sustainable development and adapted to local contexts, needs and knowledge;
  – the social and financial accessibility of populations and the private sector to the technical knowledge generated.

- In 2019, in the framework of the Central Africa Backbone (CAB) project funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB), Cameroon deployed an additional 105 kilometers of optical fiber as part of the cross-border interconnection.

2. **To what extent the existing cooperation programmes are aligned with the development priorities of participating developing countries?**
In Cameroon, the alignment of our STI cooperation programs with the development priorities of participating developing countries is a top priority. Most notably, our national development strategies, including the Cameroon Digital Transition Strategy, play a pivotal role in guiding these efforts.

The Cameroon Digital Transition Strategy is a testament to our commitment to harnessing the potential of digital technologies and innovation to drive economic growth, social development, and sustainability. This strategy identifies key pillars and priority areas, such as digital infrastructure, e-governance, digital skills development, and digital entrepreneurship, which are in line with the development agendas of many developing countries seeking to leapfrog into the digital age.

Our STI cooperation programs actively take into account the principles and objectives outlined in the Digital Transition Strategy. This ensures that our collaborations with other developing countries align with their own development priorities, which often include digital transformation, access to digital services, and technology-driven innovation.

Additionally, the Cameroon government recognizes that the effective implementation of STI cooperation programs requires a consultative and inclusive approach. This means engaging in regular dialogue with participating countries to understand their specific development needs and tailoring our programs to address those needs.

The alignment is not only limited to digital transformation but also extends to broader development goals. We strive to ensure that our cooperation programs align with national and international development agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063. These global frameworks provide a comprehensive roadmap for development that resonates with the aspirations of many developing countries.

3. **What are the main outcomes of such mechanism(s)? And what are the impacts of the resultant cooperation on your country? Pls. include the gender dimension**.

4. **What are the main difficulties member countries have encountered or are facing when implementing the cooperation mechanisms?**

Developing countries like Cameroon face a number of difficulties when implementing cooperation mechanisms in STI. These difficulties include:

Lack of financial resources: Developing countries often lack the financial resources to invest in STI cooperation.

Lack of human resources: Developing countries often lack the human resources, such as scientists, engineers, and technicians, to implement STI cooperation. This is due to a number of factors, including low levels of education, brain drain, and lack of opportunities for training and development.

Lack of infrastructure: Developing countries often lack the infrastructure, such as laboratories, research facilities, and communication networks, to implement STI cooperation.

Difficulties in transferring technology: Developing countries often face difficulties in transferring technology from developed countries. This is due to a number of factors, including intellectual property rights, high costs, and lack of adaptation to local conditions.

Difficulties in adapting technologies to local conditions: Developing countries often face difficulties in adapting technologies developed in developed countries to local conditions.

5. **In respect of achieving the objectives and goals, what are the factors contributing to the success or failure of the cooperation mechanism(s) that your country has joined in?**

6. **In your country's view, what role could CSTD play in coordinating and imparting directionality to international STI collaboration and technology sharing?**

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) could play a number of roles in coordinating and imparting directionality to international STI collaboration and technology sharing. These roles include:

Fostering dialogue and cooperation: The CSTD could foster dialogue and cooperation between countries on STI issues. This could be done by organizing conferences, workshops, and other events.

Providing technical assistance: The CSTD could provide technical assistance to countries to help them develop their STI capabilities. This could include providing training, advice, and support.

Promoting the sharing of information and knowledge: The CSTD could promote the sharing of information and knowledge on STI. This could be done by publishing reports, organizing workshops, and developing online resources.

Building partnerships: The CSTD could build partnerships between countries and organizations to promote STI collaboration. This could be done by bringing together different stakeholders to work on common goals.

Advocating for the interests of developing countries: The CSTD could advocate for the interests of developing countries in international STI discussions. This could be done by raising awareness of the needs of developing countries and by promoting policies that are supportive of their development.