INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)

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Contribution by Hungary

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

Hungary – contribution

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

Data collection along well-defined indicators of sufficient quality is of paramount importance for achieving sustainability objectives. Policy decisions can be effectively framed only by reliable data, without which actions will not be well targeted. Both the involvement of the academic sector and the collection of statistical data at national and international level are important elements in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) data and data flows can contribute in two main ways to achieving the economic, social and environmental objectives of the 2030 Agenda. First, novel methods of data collection can help generate greater insights into progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by complementing official statistics, and intelligence derived from data can increasingly be incorporated into effective and more resource efficient policymaking that serves people and the planet in real time. Second, data and data flows can support the development of various technological solutions aimed at accelerating progress towards achieving the Goals.

However, there are also risk regarding data collection. The volume of data collection has grown exponentially over the past decades, and during the COVID-19 epidemic, the demand for data increased to an all-time high. The sheer volume of information often proves impossible to process and does not necessarily target the most critical areas where action is most urgently needed, so the increase in volume is not necessarily matched by improvements in quality and usability. Another risk is that, despite the large amount of data, it is often not comparable between countries or regions, making it more difficult to assess potential areas for intergovernmental cooperation.

In this context, the role of the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), to be presented at the SDG Summit in September, should be highlighted. The report, published every four years, is the result of the work of an independent panel of 15 international researchers and aims to assess the current state of sustainability and provide science-based information to inform decision-makers as they continue to implement the sustainability framework.

In line with the 2017 UN Statistical Commission report on sustainable development, we agree that the major risks of data in relation to sustainable development are

- **data security** when it comes to data breaches, cyberattacks and general cybersecurity of critical infrastructures.
- **data privacy** referring to the protection of personal data from unauthorized access, use or disclosure and preventing identity theft and surveillance.
- **data ethics** refers to the principles that guide the collection, analysis and use of data in a way that respects human rights, and basic dignity and autonomy. These basic values should be respected at all times by private companies aswell, especially when developing large scale IT systems and AI applications.
- **data sovereignty** is a community's or a country's right and authority to govern and control its own data. Risk factors of data sovereignty include data colonialism, exploitation, dependency and exclusion.

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

In our view developing countries can enjoy the same benefits of the data revolution as established and well-developed countries such as **data-based decision- and policymaking, improved public services and service delivery while also fostering innovation and startups.** The main setbacks when it comes to achieving these goals are **capacity constrains** and difficulties in **asserting data sovereignty** of developing countries.

1.3. *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?*

In addition to traditional data collection methods, modern machine and artificial intelligence-based data collection, such as big data collection and analysis, Internet of Things technologies or machine learning methods, are playing an increasingly important role in data collection. Access to these technologies in developing countries can be an important element in reducing development gaps and achieving the SDGs, while lack of access can lead to further widening of gaps. Developed countries can facilitate access to these technologies and relevant know-how through partnerships. In this context, it is also important to highlight the problem of access to broadband internet, which can also be an objective constraint to data collection. One of the targets of the 2030 Agenda's Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) is therefore to improve access to universal and affordable internet in developing countries. In addition to access to technology, developing relevant skills is also important, and developed countries can also contribute in this field by sharing good practices.

According to recent scientific reports the main measures developing countries can do to help overcome these obstacles is **standardization and adopting international best practices, strengthening national ecosystems and fostering a startup economy, investing in human and technical resources.**

1.4. *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?*

We recognize the important role that the UN and CSTD can play in respect of data for development, including in the context of the Global Digital Compact. We believe that the CSTD can play a crucial role in **promoting digital literacy** when it comes to data and can foster innovation among all stakeholders, especially in developing countries, to enhance their ability to access, understand and use data effectively and responsibly. CSTD can also support capacity-building, training, education programmes and can engage in raising awareness on data for economic development where appropriate.

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

Hungary is a member of the European market-oriented research and development cooperation (EUREKA). The cooperation aims to increase Europe's global competitiveness through the international coordination of industrial and technological research in international partnerships, mainly with the support of RDI activities involving businesses that lead to innovative products, processes or services. The participating countries are the followings: 27 Member States of the

EU, Chile, South Africa, Great Britain, South Korea, North Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Canada, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, Singapore, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine.

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology): aims is to harmonise nationally-funded basic research in science and technology at a European level. The participating countries are the followings: EU 27, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, and Turkey.

2. 2. *To what extent the existing cooperation programmes are aligned with the development priorities of participating developing countries?*)

EUREKA: Projects funded under the EUREKA focus on near-market research and development aimed at the creation of innovative products, processes and services. EUREKA is characterised by a bottom-up approach which does not predefine R&D directions or areas; the focus of a project is always determined by the initiator businesses and research institutions and the market needs.

COST: Action objectives are determined by the researchers themselves through grassroots initiatives, the main criterion is scientific excellence.

2. 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.*

Benefits of the EUREKA membership for Hungary:

- Opportunity for SMEs to launch innovative projects in international consortia without any restriction on the topic.
- Opportunity for joining leading research groups and consortia led by prominent large companies.
- Since joining the organisation Hungarian businesses and research institutions have participated in around 100 EUREKA projects.

Benefits of the COST membership for Hungary:

- Networking and partnership-building that pave the way for future collaborations
- Good opportunity for young researchers to join the international scientific community
- Access to the latest research findings: the findings of common research projects are generally freely accessible for participating countries

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

COST:

A recent difficulty is related to the implementation of Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506 of 15 December 2022 (Hungarian universities maintained by public interest trust are not allowed to receive EU funding currently). The rules adopted by the COST Association go beyond the scope identified by the EC as they are excluding Hungarian researchers from networks, however it is not forbidden to participate as an associated member without EU funding and it causes reputational damage to the Hungarian research community.

An overall difficulty is the sustainability of the networks once the financial support ends.

EUREKA:

EUREKA is a co-fund partnership, thus high level of coordination is required between the member states in providing the national funding. Since the individual national funding decisions are made separately, the members of the international consortium must wait for the funding decisions of each national funding agency in order to initiate the project. If one funding agency is lagging behind with the funding decision, the whole project suffers a delay.

2. 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?*)

Effective internationalization of the Hungarian stakeholders is one of the key elements in international RDI cooperation. Finding the right international partners is vital to formulate a consortium in which all the members have special skills and knowledge leading to deliver the desired output.