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Contribution by Russia

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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QUESTIONNAIRE
on the Priority Themes of the 27th session of the United Nations
Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)
(2023-2024)

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 has the potential to be a powerful catalyst for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. The use of data combined with cutting-edge technologies can provide the widest range of opportunities to monitor the situation in the field of sustainable development in specific areas and quickly develop evidence-based sectoral policies related to all SDGs. Revolutionary technical solutions related to data are helping to accelerate the pace of, deepen the scope of and improve access to various activities for achieving a wide range of SDG targets, including agricultural and industrial development, health, education, sustainable production and consumption, forging partnerships and more.

At the same time, certain risks are naturally associated with data. These are related to theft and unlawful utilization of data, including personal data of individuals, the use of data for criminal purposes, as well as large-scale consequences that may be caused by errors and technical failures in handling large amounts of information.

In particular, serious data protection risks arise as a result of the dominance and technological hegemony of a number of the largest Western ICT companies. They seek to gain in various ways uncontrolled access to user information, create technological dependence of developing countries on their products and services, and in some cases prevent States from ensuring their sovereignty in relation to the regulation of the ICTs.

One of the key elements of the innovation system in any country is scientific and technical information. The innovative path of every State directly depends on the degree of the development and the diversity of forms of scientific and technical

information, management of information flows and information resources in the scientific and technical field. A characteristic feature of international scientific and technical cooperation in the 21st century is the development of international scientific and technical partnerships in knowledge-intensive fields. An important factor determining the progress of international scientific and technical cooperation is the designing and utilization of information and communication technologies. A necessary condition for the interaction of scientists and specialists in the area of science is also the presence of the necessary scientific infrastructure, including information infrastructure.

In this context, a new generation national research computer network based on extensive high-speed backbone infrastructure has been created in Russia for the benefit of leading scientific and educational organizations. It provides opportunities for research and development in priority areas of scientific and technological development and participation in major scientific projects. The target users of the network are teachers, students, scientists and researchers. Currently, more than 60% of leading Russian scientific and educational organizations are connected to this telecommunication network.

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

Disruptive technological solutions and breakthrough scientific achievements, such as artificial intelligence, big data and the Internet of things, can give the countries of the global South opportunities to reduce the gap in socio-economic development, accelerate and expand their economies, “leapfrog” to a more advanced technological paradigm bypassing intermediate stages, partially compensate for the shortage of capital infrastructure, expand the pace, horizons and depth of long-term planning and improve sectoral policies.

To successfully realize this potential, developing countries necessitate access to advanced technologies, increased capacity, existing experiences and need to create their own localized competencies for their application and a developed regulatory framework that anticipates and allows to mitigate the corresponding

risks. International partnerships, including thematic multilateral cooperation on the principles of equality and non-discrimination, are intended to help addressing all these objectives.

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?

Developing countries need to strengthen their human resources and infrastructure in the area of science, including through investments in the education sector, fundamental and applied research on key trendy issues. It would require expanding national programs, improving the local school of research and updating laboratory facilities. It is important to establish public-private partnership programs with high-tech companies that would provide countries of the global South with opportunities to access advanced scientific developments, promote the localization of technologically complex production and train national personnel in the required competencies.

International cooperation has a major role to play here. As part of bilateral cooperation, developing countries can increase scientific and educational exchanges, joint research projects, share experiences and know-how with partner countries, and promote foreign investment in high-tech sectors of the economy. On the multilateral track, it would be important to develop cooperation between the countries of the global South with partner States and businesses within UN agencies operating in the field of science, education, technology and innovation to ensure access to technology in order to modernize infrastructure, encourage industrialization and localize production capacities, including in socially oriented sectors.

As part of this effort, it would be worthwhile to ramp up and invigorate the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism to achieve concrete positive results for the economies of the global South and ensure a tangible reduction in the technological gap faced by the developing world. In particular, practical dialogue, exchange of

experiences and advanced know-how between Member States can be increased within the framework of the UN Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development (STI Forum) with the involvement of relevant non-governmental, scientific and business structures, in line with the rules of the Forum.

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 role of the CSTD should be strengthened as the key intergovernmental decision-making body coordinating the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. At the same time, for now it would be premature to link the activities of the CSTD with the would-be Global Digital Compact, since the intergovernmental process for the elaboration of this document has not yet begun, and its potential results are still difficult to predict at this point.

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?

In Russia, international cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation is managed on the basis of the Strategy for Scientific and Technological Development of the Russian Federation (2016) and the Concept of International Scientific and Technical Cooperation of the Russian Federation (2019). Priority attention on the multilateral track is given to such organizations as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Group of Twenty (G20), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), etc. Relevant activities are also being carried out within the framework of the strategic partnership between Russia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Partnerships with African countries are actively developing as well, including at the 2nd Russia-Africa Summit and Economic and

Humanitarian Forum (Saint-Petersburg, 27-28 July 2023). Active cooperation continues within the framework of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO), as well as the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), the Mediterranean Science Commission (CIESM), Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR), International Center for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI), etc. Russia also has more than 230 bilateral agreements and memoranda on cooperation with partner countries in the field of science and higher education, with this list consistently growing.

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

In most of the mechanisms listed above, developing countries are among key members, making a full contribution to the formulation of priorities for these international platforms.

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

Plans for joint work in the area of science, education, technology and innovation, as well as other relevant international documents are being adopted. Efforts are being made to create joint infrastructure for scientific research and development, promote academic mobility, attract young scientists to joint activities, open research and educational centers, schools, campuses and hubs. Steps are being taken to develop a knowledge-intensive economy, introduce new mechanisms for interaction between science and businesses and stimulate the private sector to participate in scientific projects, increase the productivity of scientific research, and mainstream high-tech technologies into industrial production. Joint monitoring and assessment of advanced technological developments, related forecasting, joint research and scientific projects are carried out. Work is underway on the mutual recognition of documents qualifications and academic degrees. Scientific fora,

conferences, academic dialogues, round tables, seminars, lectures, exhibitions, thematic years and decades are held.

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

The politicization of international (including multilateral) cooperation in the field of science, education, technology and innovation undermines its constructive spirit, effectiveness, scientific and cultural dialogue, exchange of experience and best practices, and hampers the progress and development of global scientific research.

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 ty sharing?

The CSTD has a mandate to work as the key intergovernmental body of the UN for broad dialogue, international coordination of approaches and adoption of agreed decisions in the area of science, technology and innovation.