

**United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)
Twenty-fifth annual session**

**High-level panel on Science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban development
in a post-Coronavirus (COVID 19) world**

**30 March 2022, 14.30-16.30 (Geneva time)
Geneva and online**

Concept note

Background

The world is far from attaining resource efficient, safe, and inclusive urban areas, where anyone can benefit from environmentally friendly and prosperous economies and high-quality public goods and services. The overall impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated existing sustainability challenges, exposing the vulnerability and inefficiencies of urban systems worldwide, but pre-COVID urban development trends were already picturing deteriorating conditions, especially in developing countries.

Fostering more sustainable urban futures requires government leaders and other stakeholders to reorganize the functioning of urban sociotechnical systems. Housing, energy, water, mobility, waste management, economic prosperity, urban planning, gender equality, safety and security and protection from natural disasters are all examples of urban sociotechnical systems that serve urban communities. However, under the pressure exerted by exogenous forces – such as increasing urbanization, demographic changes, climate change, and unstable economies – ensuring the sustainable functioning of urban sociotechnical systems have become increasingly difficult.

In a world in which societies and economies are increasingly relying on science, technology, and innovation (STI) advancements, including digital technologies, STI must play a central role in building a better post-COVID19 future and sustainable urban areas.

Objective

The objective of the high-level panel is to discuss national and international experiences, and identify strategies to deploy and scale up science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban development in a post-COVID 19 world.

Guiding questions for discussion

- What STI solutions can contribute towards mitigating some of the most pressing sustainability challenges facing the urban sociotechnical systems?
- What can government leaders and other stakeholders do to intensify the production, deployment and up-scaling of STI solutions to urban sustainability challenges?
- What is the role of international cooperation in promoting the development and use of STI solutions for sustainable urban development?

Format of the high-level panel

The panel will begin with the introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General by the CSTD Secretariat. Then panelists will make their presentations (5-7 minutes). After this, the chair will initiate an interactive discussion among the participants, including those from the floor, starting from high-level participants.

Supporting documents

- Report of the Secretary-General: Science, technology and innovation for sustainable urban development in a post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) world. (E/CN.16/2022/3)
- Issues Paper on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Urban Development in a Post-COVID World, available at https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/CSTD2021-2022_Issues02_Urban_en_2.pdf
- Other documents available on the website of the CSTD: <https://unctad.org/meeting/commission-science-and-technology-development-twenty-fifth-session>