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

**High-level Panel on**
**"Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international level"**

**Wednesday 29th March 2023, 15:00-17:30 (Geneva time)**
**Geneva and Online**

**Concept Note**

**Background**

In accordance with the mandate received from the General Assembly and the ECOSOC, the twenty-sixth session of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) will undertake its annual system-wide review of progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international level. For this purpose, a High-level Panel will be held on the morning of 29th March 2023. The Panel will focus on the opportunities and challenges from advancement of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for achieving the WSIS vision of a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society towards the progress in achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A draft roadmap for the preparations of the CSTD's contribution to the WSIS+20 review to be held in the General Assembly in 2025 will be presented during this session.

The information society has evolved tremendously since WSIS. Digital development has revealed new challenges for the international community, seeking to enable universal inclusion in the digital economy, redress inequalities of poverty and gender, integrate digital development and environmental sustainability, tackle cybersecurity threats, including cybercrime, and protect ethics and human rights. Furthermore, new technology has continued to profoundly impact the media environment, including ways in which people access news and entertainment, the viability of traditional media sources and the reliability of the information. The concentration of information supply from social media platforms has raised concerns about interference with politics, content moderation, and potential influence on democratic governance and national sovereignty.

These developments have reinforced the need for digital cooperation, including on data issues, that is even more pertinent to contain the impact of conflict and the risk of cyber conflict. There are growing calls to strengthen the role of regulation and data governance in shaping digital development for the common good.

**Objectives**

The Panel aims to identify emerging and future opportunities and challenges faced by the information society, including the socio-economic consequences arising from acceleration of the changes caused by digitalization. The Panel will also explore relevant strategies to address them at the regional and international levels, including the role of CSTD in shaping digital development for the common good.

**Guiding questions for discussion**

The following questions will guide the discussion:

- What are the emerging and future opportunities and challenges that will affect the development potential of ICTs, including digital frontier technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and internet of things?

- What good practices can help address the risks associated with digital technologies?

- What can countries and the international community do to reduce inequalities in access to digital resources, for example with regard to the ability to use data for development?

- What can the CSTD do to enhance digital cooperation, including on data governance?

**Format of the High-Level Roundtable**

After an introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General by the CSTD secretariat, panelists will make their presentations (maximum 10 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.

**Supporting documents**

- Report of the Secretary-General: Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (A/78/62-E/2023/49), available at: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/a78d62_en.pdf

- Resolution 2022/15: Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, available at: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ecosoc_res_2022d15_en.pdf

- Documents available on the website of the CSTD: https://unctad.org/meeting/commission-science-and-technology-development-twenty-sixth-session