

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

**Panel on
“Science, Technology and Innovation in the Age of AI”**

**Monday, 20 April 2026, 15.00-18.00 (Geneva time)
Assembly Hall, 3rd floor, A-Building, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland**

Concept note

Background

The rapid rise of AI is transforming research and development process, with far-reaching implications for inclusive industrialization and fostering innovation, as emphasized by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9. To harness the benefits of AI while mitigating its potential risks, innovation policy must adapt to the technology’s distinct characteristics and challenges.

Given the global nature of AI, stronger international collaboration is essential to complement national efforts. Coordinated global action is needed to support interoperable standards, regulations and governance frameworks in response to emerging AI issues. Such collaboration is also critical to narrowing digital and AI divides between developed and developing countries, ensuring that the benefits of AI are shared more equitably.

Objective

The panel aims to examine the opportunities and challenges that AI presents for science, technology and innovation and its implications for innovation policy. It will explore policy measures to harness AI’s potential while safeguarding against its inherent risks, as well as the role of international collaboration in fostering inclusive AI and research and development.

Guiding questions for discussion

- How does the use of AI and data analytics impact research and development processes in both science and industry?
- With rapid AI-driven transformations, what are the challenges and opportunities developing countries face to enhance their STI capabilities and implement AI for science and innovation?

- What are some successful innovation policies that can guide strategies in developing countries, including initiatives to promote agile and adaptive policymaking, foster collaboration, and strengthen AI and data governance?
- How can open science and open innovation, such as open data and open-source initiatives, be leveraged to promote knowledge exchange and the diffusion on new approaches to STI?
- How can the international community foster collaboration on AI and data for science and innovation and support technological capacity-building? In what ways can the UN CSTD contribute to this effort?

Format of the 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 (maximum 15 minutes each). This will be followed by an interactive discussion among panelists and the participants. Interventions from participants in the meeting room will have a duration of maximum 5 minutes each.

Supporting documents

- Report of the Secretary-General: Science, technology and innovation in the age of artificial intelligence (E/CN.16/2026/2), available at:
(https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ecn162026d2_en.pdf)
- Issues paper on “Science, Technology and Innovation in the age of AI”, available at:
https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/cstd2025-2026_issues_ai_en.pdf
- Other documents are available on the website of the CSTD:
<https://unctad.org/meeting/commission-science-and-technology-development-29th-session>