

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

**Vienna, Austria  
15-17 January 2019**

**Opening Session: Welcoming Remark to the CSTD 2018-19 Inter-Sessional Panel Meeting**

Statement submitted by

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Welcoming remarks by  
**Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne**  
**Director, Division on Technology and Logistics**  
**Head of the CSTD Secretariat**

2018-2019 Inter-Sessional Panel Meeting  
Vienna, Austria, 15 January 2019

*Excellencies,*

*Distinguished delegates,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

In my capacity as Head of the Secretariat of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), I would like to warmly welcome you to the 2018-2019 Inter-sessional Panel. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs for hosting this meeting and for the continuous support of the Permanent Mission of Austria in Geneva during the organisation. As you know, CSTD serves as the premier platform in the United Nations for science-policy discourse. The Commission is a unique multi-stakeholder, multilateral forum for international cooperation, dialogue, sharing experience in science, technology and innovation (STI).

In this context, I am delighted to provide you with updates about the collaboration of the Chinese Government with the CSTD, which aims to strengthen South-South collaboration in the area of STI. Over the course of last year, this collaboration has developed a new set of customized training courses on STI capacity-building. Two two-weeks courses took place during last September in China on STI Policy and Management for Sustainable Development and on High-Tech Park and Incubator Development with the participation of over 30 experts and policy makers from CSTD developing countries. They included a mix of practical lectures and fascinating field visits in Guangzhou and the Wuhan Optics Valley. I am delighted to inform you that the collaboration will continue this year with a young scientist program through which 24 scientists from CSTD developing countries will have the opportunity to work in China from six to twelve months and exchange experience and knowledge.

I would also like to inform you about the efforts we have been making to strengthen the collaboration between CSTD and UN regional commissions and other stakeholders. In the past year, we have organized several briefings about the work of the CSTD, including at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the International

Federation for Information Processing (IFIP). During the African Science Forum in December, we organized a session on the CSTD priority themes, to gather inputs from the region. We will hear more about this from our vice Chair, Dr. Baipoledi later. Following up on the recommendations made by the Commission, we have submitted a project proposal for the UN Development Account. The aim of the project is to strengthen technology foresight capacities for improved adaptation to rapid technological change in Africa and Asia.

I am pleased that the priority themes for this year's panel address some cross-cutting issues related to several Sustainable Development Goals and the ambitious 2030 Agenda. The Commission will discuss today the priority theme on "*The role of science, technology and innovation in building resilient communities, including through the contribution of citizen science*". Rapid technological change is opening new pathways for building resilient communities. And this also highlights the timeliness of the other priority theme to be discussed tomorrow, on "*The impact of rapid technological change on sustainable development*". I hope that our discussions tomorrow will contribute to the better understanding of the opportunities and risks it creates, as well as the best policy responses that our community can provide.

The Secretariat has prepared two Issues Papers for the discussions ahead in collaboration with international experts in the respective fields. I would like to thank those member States and stakeholders that contributed to the Issues Papers through the submission of country case studies. 15 countries and 4 organizations<sup>1</sup> shared their experience in building resilient communities, while 11 countries and 3 UN regional commissions<sup>2</sup> provided valuable insights regarding the impact of rapid technological change. I gratefully acknowledge these valuable contributions.

I am confident that the Issues Papers and your deliberations under both priority themes will enable the Commission to continue to provide foresight on emerging trends in technologies and their developmental impact, with particular attention to emerging and disruptive technologies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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<sup>1</sup> Governments of Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Germany, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Peru, South Africa, Turkey, Uganda, and the United States of America, as well as ESCWA, UNISDR, WHO and WMO.

<sup>2</sup> Governments of Austria, Canada, Chile, Egypt, Germany, Latvia, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Turkey and the United States of America, as well as ECE, ESCAP and ESCWA.

On Thursday, the Inter-sessional Panel will examine the progress made in the implementation and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes at the regional and international levels. On Thursday afternoon, you will also have an opportunity to participate in a consultation with the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation.

I am also delighted to inform you about the one-day workshop co-organized with Austria and UN Women on Friday on "Applying a Gender Lens to Science, Technology and Innovation". I hope many of you can stay and contribute to this very important event to support gender mainstreaming efforts of the CSTD.

To conclude, I hope that the deliberations of this Inter-sessional Panel will result in pertinent and pragmatic proposals that can make the Secretary General's reports more relevant and action oriented. I also hope that the meeting will give us an opportunity to review how to reach the full potential of the Commission as well as its Gender Advisory Board. Your proposals will be presented to STI Ministers and high-level policy makers at the twenty-second session of the Commission in May 2019, and the High-Level Political Forum thereafter in July 2019.

I very much look forward to the productive exchanges in the coming days. The CSTD Secretariat will be at hand to help make the meeting a success.

Thank you.