

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

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CSTD 2018-19 priority theme on ‘The role of science, technology and innovation in building resilient communities, including through the contribution of citizen science’

Statement submitted by

India

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Statement by India on the Agenda Item: 'Role of science, technology and innovation in building resilient communities, including through the contribution of citizen science' at the 2018-2019 Inter-Sessional Panel of the CSTD, delivered by Mr. Animesh Choudhury, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in Geneva. (15th January 2019, Vienna)

Thank You Mr. Chair,

At the outset, India would like to express its sincere gratitude to the panellists for their excellent and informative presentations this morning on the role of science, technology and innovation in building resilient communities, including through the contribution of citizen science.

Citizen Science as an area is gaining ground in India but there still remains enormous untapped potential. As already mentioned this morning, India has taken some significant steps in bringing the communities closer to science, technology and innovation in particular. This includes the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, issue of unique identification numbers named Aadhar to all its citizens and the National Innovation Fund. The Traditional Knowledge Digital Library is a pioneer initiative of India to prevent misappropriation of the country's traditional medicinal knowledge on which healthcare needs of more than 70% of the population and livelihood of millions of people in India is dependent. Under TKDL, already more than 200 thousand medicinal formulations have been documented. Challenges with respect to languages and format were overcome with the translation of the data into five international languages, namely, English, Japanese, French, German and Spanish.

On the subject of disaster resilience, India has a comprehensive and inclusive national disaster management plan both at the national level as well as the regional levels. A ten point agenda enunciated by the Prime Minister of India during the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2016 focuses on the greater role of women in disaster risk management, developing a network of universities to work on disaster related issues, utilising social media and mobile technologies as a tool for disaster risk reduction and most importantly focuses on building local capacity and initiative to enhance disaster risk reduction. However, the enormous geographical area and diversity of India do present their own challenges.

Mr. Chair,

India appreciates the point that was raised by one of the panellists this morning on the significant role of citizen science to build and collate data at the granular level so as to ensure targeted and focussed delivery of the scientific tools.

However, it is our belief that awareness on the subject is still in its infancy and this needs to be taken to the next level. First of all, we should work towards an internationally accepted definition of 'citizen science'. It is understood that there are a number of positive initiatives in the area of citizen science taking place across the world. However, these discussions on citizen science and its applications need to be institutionalised. There should be a global platform that brainstorms and discusses the challenges and initiatives in the field across the globe.

This will enable us to learn from each other's experiences and initiatives so that such ideas could be replicated to solve similar problems in other parts of the world.

Thank You.