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Contribution by Iran

to the CSTD 2019-2020 priority theme on "Harnessing rapid technological change for inclusive and sustainable development"

Harnessing rapid technological Change for inclusive and sustainable development
Input from Islamic republic of Iran
Aug 9102
First Question:

Since the Islamic Republic of Iran understood the critical and potential role of advanced technologies to achieve sustainable and inclusive development, during the last recent years, the vice presidency for science and technology (VPST) of Iran focused on shaping and boosting innovation ecosystem with emphasis on frontier technologies throughout the country.
The result was impressive and thousands of startups and knowledge-based companies are now active in Iran. However, one of the main concerns and policy priorities for VPST is related to diversification of this ecosystem especially in the areas like education, water, energy, health, food security and agriculture, virtual society, and transportation.
To achieve this goal, here we highlighted two important approaches of the VPST: first creation of sustainable future based on the promoting required dialogue through the different level of society. And second, actively engagement by all the governmental bodies, NGOs, and private sectors to create advocacy coalition to update the regulation in favor of sustainable development and innovation.
For the first approach, within the framework of sustainable development, and through the Iran national foresight program, VPST is guiding the students, entrepreneurs, startups and investors to the mentioned priority areas.
The program's approach is to go beyond the list of possible and emerging technologies in the future, it want to present a practical guideline for involvement of all levels of society and enhance their understanding about the challenges of new technological solutions. The program also seeks to build a knowledge-based discourse and awareness of the changes and future issues that society will face among all the stakeholders. The other objective of this national plan is to enhance the innovation ecosystem to seize the opportunities and give solution to the emerging challenges and threats of new era. One of the effective actions of this program was studying the international experience of startups in more than twenty subjects like waste, sports and physical health, pollution, agriculture, water and drought by discussing society challenges and the startup solutions, their business models, the role of new technologies, and etc.
The second approach is building advocacy coalition in favor of innovation and sustainable development, this is very critical approach because the policy makers should understand the pros and cos of new technologies especially for the digital technologies. In one hand, we need a change management strategy to overcome the different barriers of transformation from old business models to the new ones. On the other hand, the government should attention to the negative externalities of the new technologies.
The regulatory case of Iranian Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) is one of the recent important and complex case. VPST supports these local brands since they provide smart and low cost services to the society, but also it considers negative factors. For examples the impact of these platforms on traffic and immigration, or the neglected rights of drivers and the quality of job created and promoted by them (these companies not classify drivers as their employees), the case of competition and trust within this industry are among the policy concerns. The VPST and other regulatory bodies try to mitigate the negative impacts for the society. A unique aspect of this process is the close collaboration of VPST and TNCs to develop innovation ecosystem and using the capacity and market of TNCs to shape a green transportation and electronic vehicles industry in Iran. In this case TNCs provide incentives for the riders who use evehicles.
We hope that this collaboration help us to develop another infant knowledge base industry in Iran.

The second and third question

Here, the crucial goal is to achieve both economic prosperity and development and a commitment that the development processes must benefit people, particularly the poor.
In this regard, Iran adopts coherent STI strategies for achieving social benefits and equality goals plus

implementing STI policy frameworks and instruments for promoting social innovation. Furthermore they are to empower undermined citizen and inclusiveness in competitive advantage for stakeholders in particular rural and under developed regions.
These strategies have been implemented by vibrant domestic entrepreneurship ecosystems with a focal role of Start-ups in Iran. For example, new business model and startups have been developed; finance and investment have been directed to knowledge-based economy to strengthen both national innovation systems of Iran as well as to promote social innovation.
The relation between STI and social objectives is a two-way road, not only STI ecosystem could help and harness social objectives but also there are plenty of opportunities for startups regarding empowering people or inclusiveness. Startups could earn benefit by solving issues, and challenges. This win-win relationship is at the heart of Iran's policies.
In Iran, startups are working to fulfill the needs of the disabled, poor women and children, residents of deprived areas, addicts, homeless and finally prisoners. They deploy various technologies and platforms to (partly) resolve the needs of such people.
To make it happen, the main policy of government is counselling and providing the necessary infrastructure for private sectors, NGOs, social entrepreneurs, religious groups and charities. So the societies themselves could provide impressive impact in order to reach sustainable development.
With the help of domestic online platforms, we have created a free high-quality, education for all Iranians. The platforms cover all areas of the education, and professors and academics can publish educational content on their video sharing channel. These platforms provide education and skills for lower classes of society for free.
Apart from educational platforms, there are plenty of collective financing platforms that collect financial support for charity, social responsibility and empowerment projects, and provide poor people, the opportunity to realize their ideas. There are always a variety of projects in a friendly way that you can support in accordance with your favorite topics.

The fourth question:

This is now all international org and governments' duty to prepare the grounds for connecting startups as well as innovative enterprises from different parts of the world with one another and facilitate their collaboration. Surely, this will provide coupled synergy for innovation and social benefits. However, lack of facilities would make connectivity and mobility of entrepreneurs and communication networks between them very difficult. Furthermore, financial transactions and other required institutional coordination between international sides require governments' attention. So, CSTD and with the help of UNCTAD should go beyond technical assistance and policy frameworks, they should facilitate more practical steps. For example, designing and executing some mechanism to share important technologies among developing countries especially in key areas like hygienic water, health, renewable energy, and ICT.

The fifth question:

The following people are available for providing more information:
Mahdi Elyasi (elyasi@isti.ir)
Mohammad Sadegh Saremi (saremi@tsi.ir)

The sixth question:

For more information please check the following website:
http://iranforesight.ir/
http://Daneshbonyan.ir/
https://irannoafarin.ir