Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission, sixth session
Geneva, 28 April - 2 May 2014

Opening Session

Statement by Ms. Anne Miroux
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Mr Chairman
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address this sixth session of the Commission and to share with you some thoughts based on UNCTAD's work on science, technology and innovation (STI) that may be relevant for your deliberations on the potential role of STI policies in building more inclusive economies and societies.

I would like to start with some reflections about the importance of STI policies for inclusive innovation, which is a key part of the agenda of this Commission. A specific discussion on this topic is indeed scheduled for next Wednesday. The note prepared by UNCTAD as an input to this discussion deals with the various concepts of inclusive innovation that are increasingly used by scholars of innovation as well as among policy-makers[1].

The Secretary-General has already made several observations about the crucial importance of inclusive innovation. Let me just insist on a few points.

The first point I would like to stress is that **inclusive innovation is a crucial element of the post-2015 era.** An important reason why inclusive innovation, which is a relatively new concept, is getting so much attention in developing countries is its potential to help achieve more equitable, sustainable and inclusive development, which is central to the post-2015 development agenda. Innovation has been a key engine of economic growth and progress around the globe. However, if we are to take on the challenges of the post-2015 era, such as the eradication of extreme poverty, and indeed if innovation is to help bridging the gaps the Secretary-General just mentioned, it has to go beyond reaching the few to reach the many. In other words, innovation has to be inclusive.

The second point is the **significant opportunities for economic growth that low-income markets represent** (especially for firms from developing countries) when their aggregated

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[1] "Innovation policy tools for inclusive development" (TD/D/C.11/25).

potential is considered. This is clearly a win-win opportunity waiting to be realized, but awareness on this potential needs to be raised and support needs to be provided

Hence my third point: **the key role of policies and institutions**. This role is essential in providing an enabling environment for the development, implementation and diffusion of inclusive innovations. There is a need for well-articulated goals, objectives and strategies. In developing such strategies and objectives is it important to adopt an integrated approach, one that considers not only the designers of innovations but also their beneficiaries. As a result, the design of inclusive innovation policies requires the establishment of appropriate mechanisms and incentives that *enable and* stimulate the participation of the private sector and other stakeholders. This will be further discussed on Wednesday afternoon, on the basis of the above mentioned background note prepared by the Secretariat.

My fourth and last point is that inclusive innovation policies – which increase the scope and benefits of innovation to more vulnerable groups - are of course, a subset of broader innovation policies for development. **They are a complement to industrial policies and structural transformation efforts.** Let me recall in that respect that the Intergovernmental Expert Meeting on "Innovation for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development: Policy Frameworks, Instruments and Key Capabilities", organized last month[2], highlighted that efforts to continue strengthening productive capabilities are essential to fostering sustainable development and examined in that context the crucial role of innovation in building productive capacities as well as the policy frameworks, instruments and key capabilities to this end.

We will continue to work on the topic of innovation, industrial policies and structural transformation, including for instance through the preparation of our next Technology and Innovation Report on "Promoting Innovation Policies for Industrial Development" which will focus on how innovation policies can expressly promote industrial development, and what lessons can be learnt from existing experiences of countries, both developing and developed.

As an illustration of the work that we have been doing on some aspects of inclusive innovation, I would like to mention in particular our work on STI (including ICTs) and gender. Two of our latest reports on this topic (based on a number of case studies) explore practical mechanisms on how STI can help improving the livelihood of women[3] and how ICT can help empowering women entrepreneurs[4].

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[2] This meeting, organized on 20-22 March in Geneva, was the second in the series of the Multi-year expert meeting on investment, and entrepreneurship for productive capacity-building and sustainable Development.

[3] "Technology in Action: Good practices in science, technology and innovation policies for women in South Asia", 2014. (Forthcoming)

[4] "Empowering women entrepreneurship through ICTs: A pratical guide", UNCTAD Current Studies on Science, Technology and Innovation, No 9.

Mr Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me turn now to another important aspect of our work in STI for development, i.e. our work for the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development which provides important opportunities for cross-fertilization with this Commission. In a few weeks we will host the seventeenth session of the CSTD. This will take place in Geneva from 12 to 16 May. The CSTD will address two priority themes. Both themes are particularly relevant to UNCTAD's current debates as they deal with 1) the post 2015 development agenda and 2) inclusive development.

a) Indeed, the first priority theme of the next CSTD is "Science, technology and innovation for the post-2015 development agenda". Delegates will first take stock of a decade of contributions of the CSTD to the Millennium Development Goals as they will examine the work of the CSTD as the primary UN body specializing in STI matters. Based on this, participants will look forward and discuss key STI areas that will be important while structuring a post-2015 agenda on inclusive and sustainable development.

b) "Information and communications technologies for inclusive social and economic development" is the second priority theme of the CTSD. The report of the Secretary General prepared for this occasion examines how developing countries can benefit from recent developments in ICTs, such as datafication, big-data analysis, cloud computing, smart systems, etc. to narrow the digital divide but also what these mean for developing countries. The report identifies key issues for treatment in the post-2015 development agenda. It discusses public policy implications, for example in the context of increasing participatory democracy, improving sustainability, and stimulating job creation. It considers the opportunities but also the challenges introduced by these trends, such as responsible use, privacy, predictive profiling, and data ownership.

In addition, the CSTD session will feature a substantive discussion on the progress made in the implementation and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). It is expected that the discussion will provide an opportunity to discuss broad issues related to the ten-year review of WSIS.

The CSTD meeting will also feature a substantive and special session on the progress made in the implementation and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and on the WSIS+10 Review process. (One can note in that respect that the Net Mundial international conference that just ended in Brazil refers in its declaration to the two working groups of the CTSD on internet related issues).

To close my remarks I would like to remind you that this Friday the Commission will have the occasion to discuss in detail the work undertaken by UNCTAD in the area of science, technology and innovation under its three pillars: research and analysis, consensus-building,

and technical assistance. In this regard, I would like to point out that we have made available in this room our latest Activities Report. This document can give you a quite in-depth overview of our work. I invite you to consider it and welcome the opportunity of reporting to you about it in a few days.

I would like to conclude these words by expressing our gratitude to our donors for their invaluable support to our activities in the field of STI and by wishing you all a fruitful discussion this week.