

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**  
**Management Segment**

Item 18: Economic and environmental questions

Report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its twenty-seventh session (E/2024/31)

Introduction by H.E. Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah  
Chair of the CSTD

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Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Good morning!

I am pleased to introduce the report of the 27th annual session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) held from 15 to 19 April in Geneva, Switzerland.

This session started with a Ministerial Roundtable on the role of STI in delivering sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. A dozen ministerial speakers shared their countries' experiences to bring STI into full play in achieving the 2030 agenda. These include fostering the creation and growth of start-ups as they play an important role in connecting technology with the society, engaging research in frontier technologies such as quantum computing, and renewable energy; improving the quality of higher education and developing scientific and technological research; promoting innovation and technology transfer; and ensuring investments in water desalination technologies.

The two priority themes: a) Global cooperation in STI for Development; and b) Data for Development sparked a lot of interest among participants. On the first theme, it was stressed that STI cooperation should aim at closing the technology gap between developed and developing countries, including through increased ODA and increased involvement in global research networks. A first-ever exhibition about international cooperation in applying STI to address concrete development challenges was held, with exhibitors from the governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and academia.

There was an intense debate about data, and the deeply connected issue of Artificial Intelligence and their impact on development. It was generally shared that data has become a crucial economic development asset, and it can, if managed properly, drive progress towards sustainable and inclusive development. The majority of developing countries face significant challenges in digital

and infrastructural development and need capacity building. The world needs an improved understanding of key aspects of data governance. Given the multidimensional nature of data and the diverse national perspectives on its definition and governance, the UN could act as a neutral and inclusive platform for holistic discussions. Member States encouraged the CSTD to consider establishing a multistakeholder working group on the fundamental principles of data governance.

We also had extensive discussions about the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) and its 20-year review, the Global Digital Compact process and their interconnections.

Finally, we launched the STI policy review for the Seychelles, the Biogas Technology Assessment Report for the Seychelles and the Agrivoltaics Technology Assessment Report for Zambia prepared under the capacity building projects by UNCTAD as the secretariat of the CSTD.

Speaking of capacity building, Mr. Vice President, Distinguished delegates, I would like to add that the CSTD, with persistent efforts by its secretariat, has experienced increasing North-South and South-South cooperation in leveraging STI for development. My predecessor, Ms. Ana Cristina das Neves shared some examples at the Coordination Segment in February this year - during the Conversation on sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These cooperation programmes address the issues that have been discussed at the CSTD and respond to the resolutions adopted by the CSTD and approved by the ECOSOC on these issues.

For the 28th CSTD, which will take place from 7 to 11 April 2025 in Geneva, we will consider two priority themes:

- 1) Diversifying economies in a world of accelerated digitalization; and
- 2) Technology foresight and technology assessment for sustainable development.

In addition, we will discuss the 20 years' implementation of the WSIS and submit a report, through ECOSOC to the General Assembly for its WSIS+20 review in 2025.

In conclusion, in fulfilling its dual mandates on STI for development and review of the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the WSIS, the CSTD provides a platform for stakeholders to share best practices, discuss topical issues and collaborate to leverage STI for finding sustainable, resilient and innovation solutions for the achievement of SDGs. We hope you can join us in the next inter-sessional panel of the CSTD on 21 and 22 October and the annual session in April in Geneva.

Thank you!