

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Coordination Segment

Panel 1: Conversation with Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions and Chairs of functional commissions and expert bodies on accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals including by leveraging the outcomes of the Summit of the Future

Talking points of H.E. Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah
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- Allow me to first recall that the Pact for the Future includes a dedicated chapter on science, technology and innovation (STI) and digital cooperation. This was built upon the explicit recognition of technology as a means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda, as underlined by SDG 17. The Pact for the Future also confers new responsibilities on the CSTD through the Global Digital Compact, which requests the CSTD to “establish a dedicated working group to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue on data governance at all levels as relevant for development”. We are now working intensely on the establishment of the Working Group.
- Today, I’d like to share with you the policy guidance that CSTD would recommend in two areas:
 - 1) Diversifying economies in a world of accelerated digitalization; and
 - 2) Technology foresight and technology assessment for sustainable development.These were the themes we discussed at the latest intersessional panel held on 21 and 22 October 2024 as they are evidently relevant to the Member States and the UN system in accelerating our progress on the SDGs through STI.
- For many developing countries, economic diversification remains one of the keys to development. Economic diversification implies transforming the economic structures of countries to reduce reliance on a limited number of sectors or commodities.
 - Such transformation requires upgrading of industrial capabilities. Governments should put in place proper policies, including tax or other incentives, to channel investment into activities that upgrade the country’s industrial capabilities, and to foster stronger linkages between industries and research institutions.
 - In the digital age, diversification is not just about expanding into new industries but also about harnessing digital tools such as automation and AI to enhance productivity, innovation, and economic growth across all sectors. While promoting digital literacy and skills development, Governments should engage with

stakeholders to identify the potential applications of digital technologies across the economy that can support economic diversification and industrial upgrading. Regulation should also be designed to deal with the unintended consequences of rapidly evolving new technologies like artificial intelligence.

- Technology foresight and technology assessment help policymakers and other stakeholders prepare for and shape the impact of emerging technologies, ensuring that technological innovation drives inclusive and sustainable economic growth. They can help with immediate decisions and long-term strategic policies as well for developing or deploying new technologies.
 - Today both technology foresight and technology assessment are weak areas for most developing countries. It is imperative that they set up an institutional framework and allocate resources for them.
 - International organizations' technical assistance can surely help them build capacity in these areas, as demonstrated by the UNCTAD project on technology assessment that has helped the Seychelles, South Africa and Zambia.

As the focal point in the United Nations for promoting science, technology, and innovation for development, the Commission on Science Technology for Development (CSTD) offers an important space for dialogue and collaboration on how to leverage STI to accelerate our progress in implementing the SDGs. It is especially needed in this time when multilateralism is challenged and science and technology have become increasingly a subject for competition and potential conflict between major countries.