

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Management Segment

Item 18(b) Science and technology for development

Report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its
outcomes of the twenty-ninth session ([E/2026/31](#))

Briefing by Mr. Xian Zhang
Chair of the CSTD 29th Session

New York, 21 July 2026

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to introduce the outcomes of the Commission's twenty-ninth annual session held from 20 to 24 April 2026.

With participants from 95 countries, the session started with a ministerial roundtable where Ministers and other high-level representatives shared national experiences in leveraging the role of STI in transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda, in line with this year's HLPF theme. They emphasized the need for innovation to remain inclusive, development-oriented and responsive to national priorities, as technology and innovation are not peripheral to sustainable development but are central to it.

The discussion on the priority theme, "Science, Technology and Innovation in the Age of Artificial Intelligence," generated significant interest and the two Co-Chairs for the inaugural Global Dialogue on AI Governance came to the Commission to interact with the participants. Particularly participants expressed concern that AI could deepen existing divides in STI between and within countries. The Commission therefore emphasized that AI governance must be closely linked to capacity-building and equitable access to digital infrastructure.

The Commission met at an important moment for this year's WSIS review, following adoption of the General Assembly's 20-year WSIS review outcome resolution last

December. It gave more explicit attention to coherence and synergies between WSIS implementation, the 2030 Agenda and the Global Digital Compact and called for the United Nations Group on the Information Society to further develop its joint implementation road map presented at the session. It also requested that the WSIS action line facilitators report to its 30th annual session, on developing targeted and result -oriented implementation road maps for their respective action lines, linking them with relevant SDG targets and GDC commitments, including potential targets, indicators and metrics to facilitate monitoring and measurement.

Finally, on technical cooperation in the STI field, reports on UNCTAD's CropWatch Innovative Cooperation Programme and its project on science, technology and innovation parks for sustainable development illustrated how targeted assistance and international partnerships can strengthen developing countries' capacities

The Commission also advanced its work on data governance through the Working Group on Data Governance at All Levels, as Relevant for Development. The Working Group is currently preparing its progress report organized around four thematic tracks: data governance principles, interoperability, equitable benefit-sharing and data flows. The report will be considered at the thirtieth session of the Commission and subsequently submitted to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session.

Building on this work, the Commission decided that, at its thirtieth session to be held from 19 to 23 April 2027, the priority theme will be "Data Governance for Development: From Asymmetry to Equitable Stewardship."

Before concluding, allow me to highlight a salient feature of the 29th annual session. The texts of the two resolutions underwent streamlining and improvement. In particular, the WSIS resolution was significantly streamlined and improved in respect of strengthening implementation, cooperation, and reporting. Such move makes the CSTD more relevant to today's reality and more action oriented. CSTD also decided to review the WSIS resolution on a biennial basis starting in 2028, unless otherwise agreed. It further decides to continue undertaking its annual review and assessment of progress made in implementing the WSIS outcomes.

Thank you!