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ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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Contribution by ESCWA

to the CSTD 2023-2024 priority themes on “Data for Development” and “Global cooperation in science, technology and innovation for development”

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## ESCWA's Contribution to Data for Development

### DATA

1. What are the major contributions and risks of data in relation to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
  - Data availability
  - Data quality
  - Data protection and privacy
  
2. How can developing countries benefit from the data revolution while considering risks?
  - Awareness about impact and challenges
  - Building capacity on both dimensions (technical officials and policy makers)
  - Develop and adopt national data policies/strategies
  
3. What national and international policies and support measures can help address the challenges of the developing countries in the area of data relevant for sustainable development, including scientific and research purposes, data quality, data capabilities and data governance, while taking into account the multiple dimensions of data?
  - ESCWA developed a guide for policy makers to assess national readiness for big data
  - The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has, since 2016, worked towards the establishment of open data, especially open government data, in the Arab region. Under the open government project (2016-2022), open government data and its role in government transparency and accountability were explored. Practical guidelines<sup>1</sup> on initiating and managing open government data programmes, were developed as well as an analysis of laws and regulations<sup>2</sup> that can influence the open data development in the Arab region, such as the access to information. The Commission's work on this topic showed that policies and regulations create opportunities for open government data development, but the overwhelming nature of data, technology and innovation, requires the practical measures and guidance that countries can grab onto to actuate their plans and strategies. This was evident in the requests received for advice on national policies and those for workshops that focused equally on policy needs and technical requirements.
  - The work on open data continues within the context of a current project on the deployment of emerging technologies in Arab public institutions (ENACT) launched in 2023. Under the project open data is explored as part of big data. Case studies on various topics, including open data, are collected from Arab countries to serve as

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<sup>1</sup> ESCWA (2019). *Capacity development material on open data*. Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/capacity-development-material-open-data>.

<sup>2</sup> ESCWA (2020). *Legal aspects of open government and open data*. Available from <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/legal-aspects-open-government-and-open-data>.

- practical examples on actualising open government, including challenges faced and lessons learned.
- ESCWA developed ISPAR platform to assist policy makers in selecting best policies and procedures to enhance national performance in several indicators, including the Open Data Inventory index (ODIN)
  - ESCWA provides thru its technical cooperation program, technical assistance and advisory services to its MSs. Examples: Readiness assessment in Palestine, Review and benchmark data policy in Libya.
4. What could be the role of the CSTD as part of the overall work on the UN in the field of digital data?
- Could take the lead in raising awareness of policy makers about the needed policies and strategies to enhance data governance in MSs.
  - Could develop tools to assist policy makers to design and measure the progress in enhancing data governance,

### **ESCWA Contribution to STI for Development**

1. What STI cooperative mechanism(s) at global or regional levels has your organization initiated or joined in?
  - Establishment of technology transfer offices to enhance link between academia and industry.
2. To what extent the existing cooperation programmes are aligned with the development priorities of participating developing countries?
  - ESCWA provides its advisory services to all MSs thru the regular technical cooperation program (RPTC). This includes, of course, developing countries and LDCs.
3. What are the main outcomes of such mechanism(s)? And what are the impacts of the resultant cooperation on participating countries? Pls. include the gender dimension
  - ESCWA assisted 6 MSs (Syria, Sudan, Mauritania, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Oman) in developing technology transfer offices.
  - Some countries, such as Syria and Sudan, have approved ESCWA proposal and started its implementation.
4. What are the main difficulties your organization has encountered or is facing when implementing the cooperation mechanisms?
  - Lack of awareness about the positive impact of such mechanisms.
  - Limited financial resources on national level might threaten the sustainability of the TT system.
  - Political instability in some countries might hinder the sustainability of TT systems.

5. In respect of achieving the objectives and goals, what are the factors contributing to the success or failure of the cooperation mechanism(s) in which your organization has joined?
  - Success factors: commitment of national partners, socio-economic stability, well-trained national staff, commitment of top management in Higher Education and Scientific research.
  
6. What cooperation could your organization propose to CSTD in coordinating and imparting directionality to international STI collaboration and technology sharing?
  - CSTD could strongly contribute to capacity building and awareness of high level management, and could coordinate inter-regional cooperation to ensure the exchange of best practices.