

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

**Lisbon, Portugal
6-7 November 2023**

Opening Session: CSTD 2023-2024 Intersessional Panel Meeting

Welcome remarks by

**Pedro Manuel Moreno
Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD**

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

CSTD, 2023-2024 Inter-sessional Panel

Lisbon, 6 November 2023

Welcome Remarks

Pedro Manuel Moreno

Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Your Excellency, Mr. Francisco André, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal,

Dear Ana Neves, Chair of the CSTD,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to join our Chair in extending a warm welcome to all of you to this Inter-sessional Panel of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development. Bem-vindos!

It is a special occasion as this event marks the first fully in-person inter-sessional since 2019.

I first would like to thank the Government of Portugal for their hospitality and leadership in organizing this event, and for their commitment and their solid support to the United Nations in general, and to UNCTAD in particular.

As the focal point in the United Nations system on the role of science, technology, and innovation (STI) for development, this Commission plays a pivotal role in driving the STI discourse for the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. The CSTD has always provided an excellent opportunity to deliberate on important issues, forge partnerships and build bridges in key areas of STI towards achieving the SDGs.

The CSTD offers a unique platform for multilateral dialogue, which is even more important in an era when international collaboration is becoming increasingly challenging to construct. And this dialogue is much needed for addressing our common challenges. We must find agreement on ways to promote the use of STI for the benefit of all people and the planet.

I am confident that the CSTD is a means for this purpose. And we can build on past experiences and successes. The collaborative spirit of this Commission has enabled learning lessons and exchanging best practices on STI, and has led to effective international cooperation, such as capacity-building initiatives that enabled developing countries to harness the benefits of STI.

Let me give you some examples:

- Thanks to the partnership between UNCTAD and SENAI – a network for technical education and technological support in Latin America, we trained participants from developing countries on frontier technologies and their applications, such as drone and remote sensing for smart agriculture by small farms.
- The CropWatch Innovative Cooperation Programme, in cooperation with the Alliance of International Science Organizations and the Aerospace Information Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is facilitating satellite data-based agricultural monitoring in some developing countries.
- UNCTAD and the University of Okayama build scientific research capacity in developing countries through the Young Female Scientist Programme and the Young Scientist PhD programme, with a focus on cutting-edge STI research for SDG implementation.

- Together with Thailand, we co-organized a training on leveraging STI for building a bio-circular-green economy, benefiting women from 9 countries.
- Together with the Atlantic International Research Centre and with financial support from Portugal, UNCTAD is collaborating on a project that will utilize geo-observation technology for sustainable urban development.

These are very practical demonstrations of the CSTD's potential. I warmly encourage Member States to make use of the CSTD to offer capacity-building programmes as they, indeed, can make a difference for achieving sustainable development.

Let me now turn to the priority themes of this inter-sessional panel. I first want to express my appreciation for the valuable contributions of the 23 Member States and 10 international organizations and other entities to the two issue papers motivating our discussions in this panel.

On theme 1 – Data for Development.

Digital data, when properly used, can guide us to understand, monitor, and predict patterns relevant to many development problems. But countries need robust capacities and an enabling national and international environment.

The sheer growth in data has highlighted the need to prioritize data issues on the international agenda, addressing issues like data protection, data privacy, data access and control, data storage, and the flow of data within and across national boundaries.

There is a clear challenge in policymaking and in creating regulatory frameworks that ensure effective and equitable data governance so that digital data works for development. I am sure that this panel can bring insights and recommendations for appropriate governance.

Now, on theme 2 – Global cooperation in STI for development.

Making progress towards Agenda 2030 for sustainable development cannot be achieved without global cooperation. Despite the challenges confronting multilateralism in today's context, cooperation has been and remains a catalyst for human progress.

Whether it is for eradicating disease, hunger, or environmental degradation, international collaboration in STI remains our greatest weapon. We have seen this recently, including at this Commission, in global efforts mobilized to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. CSTD Member States shared best-practices and lessons learned on different national, regional and international examples on how STI can be deployed to curb the virus.

Today, we face existential threats to humanity that cannot be resolved without global STI cooperation. Climate change is a clear example. The challenges we face require national actions by all countries that are supported by collective international action.

Besides these two themes, the inter-sessional panel will also **review the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society – the WSIS.**

WSIS represents the most important global undertaking to make digital technologies available to everyone to enable sustainable development.

The CSTD has been requested to provide substantive support to the WSIS+20 review of the General Assembly. I congratulate the CSTD for having launched this process with a successful open consultation during the 18th Internet Governance Forum in Kyoto, Japan. One observation that emerged from that event is the interest among stakeholders to reaffirm the relevance of the WSIS process for the future.

The WSIS review is an important element in international digital cooperation which should help to reduce the multifaceted digital divides within and across countries. These divides are likely to increase in the coming years as the current technology revolution continues to bring fundamental changes to the international economy and societies across the world.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The next two days of work convene against the backdrop of a profound global political, economic and environmental crisis. The CSTD provides an avenue to strengthen multilateral cooperation on STI which can offer a means to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future for all. Let us make sure that our work here contributes to this vision.

On that note, I wish you a productive inter-sessional panel. Thank you.
Muito obrigado.