

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

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Opening Session: CSTD 2024-2025 Intersessional Panel Meeting

Opening remarks by

Pedro Manuel Moreno
Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

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UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Inter-sessional Panel

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Opening remark

Pedro Manuel Moreno

Deputy Secretary-General of UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Your Excellency, Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah, Permanent Representative of the Gambia and Chair of this session,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I want to join Ambassador Kah in welcoming you to this Inter-sessional Panel.

We are meeting shortly after the Summit of the Future where the international community adopted the *Pact for the Future*. The pact lays out steps to tackle a wide range of global challenges. An entire section deals with science, technology, innovation, and digital cooperation, building upon the explicit recognition of technology as a means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda.

As the focal point in the United Nations for promoting science, technology, and innovation for development, you - the Commission on Science Technology for Development - play a crucial role in driving the international dialogue on STI for the 2030 Agenda.

The commission offers an important space for dialogue and collaboration. This is especially needed in this time when multilateralism is challenged.

By building consensus and sharing good policy practice, the CSTD can help make life-changing technologies accessible and affordable to everyone and support progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The commission can also identify strategies and conceive programmes to support capacity-building in developing countries, promote open science, integrate human rights perspectives into new technologies, or strengthen partnerships across borders.

Several cooperation projects have been undertaken in response to the needs countries raised at the CSTD. A recent example is the technology assessment project that UNCTAD has been implementing since 2021.

The CSTD has truly a unique opportunity — and responsibility — to harness the power of technology for development.

The Pact for the Future also brings new responsibilities to the CSTD through the *Global Digital Compact* which was adopted as an annex to the pact.

The compact calls on the Commission to – and I quote – “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”.

The establishment of the working group is an important step and process for international efforts on data governance. The compact clearly recognizes the importance of global governance setting out a framework and specifying the need to advance responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance.

The working group will report on its progress to the UN General Assembly in 2026. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the mandate of this group at a time when digital data is the fuel that drives technological change on many fronts, particularly Artificial Intelligence.

I urge all Member States to provide the necessary support so that the Working Group can effectively fulfill its mandate.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With this context, it is fitting that the inter-sessional panel addresses the following two priority themes:

The first is *Diversifying economies in a world of accelerated digitalization*.

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. It requires upgrading of industrial capabilities.

In the digital age, diversification is not just about expanding into new industries but also about harnessing digital tools and platforms to enhance productivity, innovation, and economic growth across all sectors. But the rapid emergence of new technologies like artificial intelligence poses important challenges to policymakers to design policies. In this inter-sessional panel we want to explore how policymakers can be supported.

The second theme is *Technology foresight and technology assessment for sustainable development*.

Technology foresight and technology assessment provide tools and frameworks needed to anticipate, guide, and evaluate technological change in ways that align with sustainable development. They help policymakers prepare for and shape the impact of emerging technologies, ensuring that innovation drives inclusive, sustainable economic growth rather than exacerbating inequalities or environmental challenges. They can help with immediate decisions as well as longer term strategic policies for developing or deploying new technologies.

During this inter-sessional meeting, we want to share with you best practices for STI ecosystems that we could draw from the technology assessment project mentioned earlier. UNCTAD has assessed technologies in three countries. In Seychelles, the technology assessed was solar agro-voltaic energy; in South Africa electrolyser technology for producing green hydrogen; and in Zambia biogas energy.

Finally, the inter-sessional panel will also review progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS - the World Summit on the Information Society. Also in this context, the Commission received a specific request from the Global Digital Compact, namely to consider how it can contribute to implementing the Compact, while recognizing its role in reviewing and following up on the implementation of the WSIS outcomes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

STI are at the heart of development and central in very recent global documents. We also expect that STI will be a central point in the discussions leading to the fourth Financing for Development Conference in Spain next year.

Let me finish by reiterating that UN Trade and Development remains fully committed and proud to support your work.

Thank you for your attention.