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Remarks made at The UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development Inter-sessional panel meeting, 17 November 2025

Distinguished delegates and esteemed colleagues—it is a genuine pleasure to join this crucial discussion at the UN Commission on Science, Technology and Development on the topic of **Innovation in the age of AI**.

Having closely reviewed the Issue Paper, I find myself deeply aligned with its findings and I congratulate the secretariat for such a thorough analysis.

My expertise lies in using policy as a tool to balance benefits and risks of new technologies. My comments today offer a reflection on the paper's findings, particularly regarding strategies and actions **that can guide developing countries to promote agile and adaptive policymaking to foster innovation**.

Before charting our policy course, it is important to ensure alignment and focus. To achieve that, we must define clear objectives. I believe effective national technology policy must pursue **three essential aims**:

The primary goal should be to build **TRUST and enhance adoption** of new technologies. This requires improving public understanding, facilitating public involvement, and ensuring rigorous enforcement of laws.

Secondly: AI and new technologies must serve society at large. Policies must actively promote **FAIRNESS and EQUITY**, ensuring technology benefits all segments of the population and not only serve the interests of a few.

Thirdly: Policies must **cultivate an environment** where local innovation, tailored to local needs, can flourish.

The CSTD Issue Paper correctly identifies the need for a fundamental evolution: the movement away from traditional, linear policy approaches to a **Transformative Innovation Policy (TIP) Framework**.

Figure 4 on page 18 highlights that this transformation requires concerted action across four key areas:

Moves from .

- **From Linear to a Dynamic Innovation Systems**
- **From Rigid to Adaptive Regulations**
- **From Disconnected to Open Collaborations**
- **From Narrow Focus to Inclusivity and Sustainability**

In my opinion, **Capacity Building** must be explicitly added as a fifth fundamental area to complete this picture of transformative innovation policy.

As we know, resources are finite. So, whilst we would wish to implement all of these measures, each country must prioritize and build a policy roadmap that optimizes priorities and takes into consideration important trade-offs.

Supplementing the paper's findings, and taking the Transformative Innovation Framework as a guide, here are a few priorities I believe should be considered important for developing nations:

In fostering a dynamic and interconnected innovation systems:

- While establishing **Centers of Excellence** is vital, making **SME and startup support** a dedicated policy pillar is equally essential. For instance, providing **free or heavily subsidized access to regulatory sandboxes** reduces entry barriers, enabling local startups to test and refine their AI systems safely.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)** must be elevated as a priority, transforming them into **primary drivers for resource access and knowledge exchange**.
- Crucially, stakeholders—citizens, industry, and academia—must be involved **early in the process of policy making**, not just as reviewers, but as co-designers in identifying both challenges and potential risks, as well as the policy solutions.

With regards to **moving from rigid to adaptive regulations**:

- Policymakers should, to the extent possible, **build on existing regulations**. The immediate focus must be on filling gaps in critical areas like **transparency, copyrights, IP laws, and accountability structures**, providing essential clarity and guidance.

- Governments could **enhance SAFETY** through mandating industry participation in **red-teaming exercises** for generative AI and establishing AI safety institutions, involving the private sector and citizens.
- Utilizing **AI itself** for policy monitoring and data-driven analysis is of course a great way forward, but this requires some further scrutiny in terms of the extent to which such sensitive tasks can be outsourced to non-sovereign entities and ensuring correct guardrails are in place to protect local interests.

Innovation does not thrive in silos - It requires collaboration across disciplines and borders:

The paper makes a great case for this offering **Open science and use of AI in research** as great accelerators, **and asking for multidisciplinary research**

In this context, I strongly believe that we need to define better **incentives and reward structures** for academics for example, who engage in complex, multi-disciplinary work that prioritizes societal impact.

Today these are not very well defined and therefore more work and knowledge exchange is needed in this domain.

I also agree with broadening the focus of innovation policy towards **inclusiveness and sustainability**:

BUT in this context a key priority for developing countries must be fostering **AI autonomy** to explicitly address **cultural-linguistic needs** and **ensuring local relevance**.

Another important element is to consider **gender inclusion** as a core competitive strategy.

Lastly, as I mentioned before, **Capacity Building** must be explicitly added as a fundamental requirement. This includes two critical dimensions:

Citizen and Workforce Skills: Policymakers could establish **tax incentives for firms** that invest in employee training and upskilling. Furthermore, governments must set up structured frameworks that give both **time and incentives** for workers in the **30-65 age group to reskill**, ensuring a just transition.

Legislative and Regulatory Capacity: Governments must prioritize building **regulatory enforcement capacity**, supporting legislative efforts through dialogue and knowledge sharing. Initiatives like those led by the ILO, the UN ITU as well as **UNESCO's Global Forum on AI and Digital Transformation**, which aims to equip parliamentarians and public sector employees with necessary tools, are vital for ensuring equitable enforcement globally.

In summary, I would like to offer six guiding imperatives for governments of developing countries to consider:

1. **Elevate AI policy** to a national priority, securing the necessary investment and **allocating funding** towards it.
2. Provide **regulatory clarity** by **building on existing regulations**, while simultaneously enhancing **safety and risk mitigation** through agile frameworks.
3. Actively **build public awareness and understanding** to instil trust and facilitate adoption.
4. Define processes and **develop the necessary infrastructure**—both physical and institutional—that supports domestic AI innovation.
5. Invest in both **citizen skills** to use AI, and **public sector capacity** to effectively monitor, adapt, and enforce AI regulations.
6. Recognize that successful policy requires adding **timing and priority setting** to **manage** the necessary **trade-offs** between short-term wins and long-term strategic autonomy.

By embracing this transformative approach, I feel strongly that developing countries can truly harness AI as a force for **accelerated, equitable, and sustainable progress**.

Thank you.