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6 November 2026

Briefing by Mr. ZHANG Xian
Chair of the 29th session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

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CSTD 2026–2027 Intersessional Panel
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Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Dear participants,

Good morning.

Six months ago, we concluded the 29th session of the Commission. Allow me to report briefly on how I carried the conclusions from that session forward in my capacity as Chair of the 29th session.

I did so on two occasions in New York. On 6 May, I addressed the Ministerial Session of the STI Forum on strengthening the science-policy nexus for sustainable development. On 21 July, I presented the report of our 29th session, document E/2026/31, to the Economic and Social Council at its Management Segment.

Across those two occasions, I conveyed four messages from the 29th session.

First, science, technology and innovation are not peripheral to sustainable development; they are central to it. Our ministerial roundtable at the 29th annual session aimed at contributing to the High-Level Political Forum 2026 emphasized that innovation must remain inclusive, development-oriented and responsive to national priorities.

Second, the development benefits of AI cannot be taken for granted. They will depend on policy choices, governance frameworks and international cooperation. AI could widen existing divides between countries and within them. The Commission emphasized that AI governance must go hand in hand with capacity-building and equitable access to digital infrastructure. Investment in skills and local innovation ecosystems is essential if developing countries are to shape and benefit from AI.

Third, we streamlined our resolutions on STI and WSIS and agreed to review the WSIS resolution every two years, starting from 2028, unless otherwise agreed. Our annual review of WSIS

implementation will continue, with more attention on delivery and on the evidence needed to assess the implementing progress.

Fourth, the Working Group on Data Governance at All Levels as Relevant for Development established under the Commission in March 2025 has been progressing steadily in fostering multistakeholder dialogue on data governance.

It has been a privilege for me to serve as Chair of the 29th session of the Commission. My sincere thanks go to the members of the 29th session's Bureau, to every delegation, and to the secretariat. I am confident that the Commission's 30th session will be a great success, under the leadership of Ambassador Pundurs, in carrying the Commission's work forward.

Thank you.