

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), eighteenth session
Geneva, 4-8 May 2015**

**Opening Ceremony
Item 1: Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters**

Statement submitted by

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**Opening Remarks by Mr Indrajit Banerjee,
Director
Knowledge Societies Division
UNESCO**

**on the occasion of the Opening of the
Commission on Science and Technology for Development**

Geneva, 4 May 2015

Mr Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,

Ms Ombola Johnson, Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development,

Mr Francis Gurry, Secretary-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization,

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Excellencies, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNESCO is pleased to contribute to this eighteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

2015 is an especially important year for the development community, and CSTD's and your role cannot be underestimated. It has produced the 10 year WSIS report, with all our contributions. CSTD is also influential, as its resolution will go through ECOSOC to the United Nations General Assembly, and will contribute to shaping the Post-2015 processes, particularly WSIS beyond 2015.

Let me start by commending CSTD on an excellent Ten Year Review Report on implementing the WSIS outcomes. It has been an inclusive and consultative process leading to this report.

UNESCO would have, however, preferred if the enormous work generated through the WSIS+10 Reviews in 2013 and 2014 – hosted respectively by UNESCO and ITU, and co-organized with UNCTAD and UNDP – had been more visible in the report. These were outstanding processes and outcomes, covered altogether by only 1½ pages of a 200 page report.

We do nevertheless recognize this very useful work and analysis, and thank CSTD for a generally balanced and well thought analysis.

And it is this kind of analysis, which lets us draw on the lessons learned, which we will need to shift from the MDGs to SDGs. For the SDGs, we need to build on the wisdom and knowledge gained, including on the knowledge gained through the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the MDGs.

UNESCO's vision is that this kind of learning, the knowledge acquisition is key for the emergence of inclusive Knowledge Societies, which hold in turn the key to sustainable human and economic development. It is in inclusive Knowledge Societies that people have the capabilities not just to acquire information, but also to transform it into knowledge and understanding. In building and developing these societies, ICTs can be a powerful instrument, but they are not an end in themselves.

People often consider 'Knowledge Societies' to be a UNESCO concept, elaborated with UNESCO's World Report on Knowledge Societies published at WSIS in 2005. However, it was actually this distinguished body, the CSTD that issued the first report on Knowledge Societies already in 1998, and initiated the concept of Knowledge Societies, which is now in broader use.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

But how do WSIS and the SDGs interrelate? UNDP, UNCTAD, ITU and UNESCO designed the WSIS Forum 2015 with the focus on exploring how the WSIS Action Lines can best serve the SDGs. Now it is time to examine how we can further leverage the existing, and break down some Action Line silos to jointly contribute to SDGs.

Another challenge that lies before us is to be even more explicit on how science and technology can concretely contribute to the sustainable development agenda.

Science is critical to ensure sustainable development and eradicate poverty. It lays the foundations and creates the knowledge for new approaches and technologies to identify and address global challenges for the future. UNESCO is the only United Nations specialized agency with a specific mandate for science. The Secretariat to the Scientific Advisory Board of the UN secretary General is hosted by UNESCO.

In order to take advantage of countries' full potential of scientific and technological knowledge, as well as realize sustainable industries, foster innovation and promote sustainable economic growth, it is necessary to set up robust national Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies and systems.

UNESCO has launched an initiative called Global Observatory on STI policy instruments (GO-SPIN) which serves STI stakeholders, policy-makers and scientists as a tool for capacity-building, governance and research. Since 2012, UNESCO has helped 11 Sub-Saharan countries to produce their national STI systems inventories following GO-SPIN methodology.

As 2015 marks a turning point year for the world, our contributions to the Sustainable Development Agenda and WSIS beyond 2015, as well as understanding the role of science and technology in these processes, are essential.

UNESCO is pleased to continue contributing to the overall WSIS Review at the UNGA, to shaping the WSIS beyond 2015 as well as promote the sciences with all other stakeholders as a key catalysor towards the sustainable development goals.

I look forward to the fruitful deliberations this week.

Thank you.