

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-second session  
Geneva, 13-17 May 2019**

**High-level roundtable on “The role of STI in empowering people and in  
ensuring inclusiveness and equality”**

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**Monday, 13 May 2019**

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## THE ROLE OF STI IN EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND IN ENSURING INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUALITY

- Nepal is in historic juncture of development after the landmark elections of 2017 that has elected nearly 36,000 officials at local, provincial and federal parliaments. At least 40% of the representatives is women. We also have proportionate representations from all the communities, including those socially deprived. The guiding principle of the constitution, Inclusiveness and equality is well captured in the election. In my view, the special emphasis must be on empowering this huge number of representatives, especially those at local level women and socially deprived people who can make a remarkable inclusive and equal contribution in our development endeavors.
- The marginalized communities and Dalits have been contributing to societies with major functions such as cleaning and sanitation, iron work, tanning and shoe making, clothing, etc. Some indigenous communities have mastered in awesome crafts and technologies. Ironically, by development indicators these marginalized and Dalit communities are far lagged behind. Secondly, empowering those means conserving and recognizing their technical skills and mainstreaming them for further improvement.
- In April 2015, Nepal suffered from a massive earthquake killing about 9000 people and affecting nearly half of its population, who are still struggling to recover. In our view, the empowerment, therefore, should focus to those who have been deprived for ages and suffering from massive disasters.
- In this scenario of Nepal and equally applicable to developing countries, we can help to empower the people equally through use of technology and innovation as follows,
  - Access to electricity and Internet (both are about 75%) provides the basis to use the technology and applications in rural and urban areas equally across the country.
  - Then, quality education with scientific knowledge and use of technology better improves the learning process and makes easier, increases opportunities, and eventually it helps to maximize people's independence, productivity, efficiency and participation.
  - Innovative and adaptive technology with the ICT can help to skip the traditional technology and use directly the advance technology that lead to the highest levels of success- personal, social, academic and professional at all levels.

### What Nepal Government is doing?

- Positive affirmation policy, Gender and Inclusion strategy is in place and well implementing to provide the equal access in resources and services for women, poor, marginalized and socially deprived people at all levels.
- The recent draft policy of STI of Nepal has recommended to recognize the knowledge carriers and practitioners of Dalit, marginalized and indigenous communities by providing Technical Diploma equivalent to formal degrees which gives a sense of equality in one hand and provides opportunity to enhance their capabilities through modernization.
- Nepal is committed to pursuing and achieving SDGs by 2030 as these global ambitions are also aligned with our new constitution and mainstreamed into National, provincial and Local level budgeting and development planning systems, In adherence of the constitution and SDGs, Nepal's development plan has well captured the spirit of "no one left behind".

### What we expect from international community?

- To meet these common challenges of the developing countries like Nepal, a collaborative approach is Required. The prime responsibility is of the government and the role of the private sector, international development partner and International community is vital to make the knowledge and emerging technologies accessible to the people as mentioned.
- Data: per capita income of the Dalits is US\$ 977 per year, whereas the national average is US\$ 1597 per year. The HDI of Dalits (0.424) is the lowest in Nepal (Shahi 2017).

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