

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-fourth session  
Geneva, 17-21 May 2021**

**Opening Session**

Address by

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**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT THE 24<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT**

17 MAY 2021

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

**For nearly three decades, this Commission has been the pillar of the UN's policy deliberations in this crucial area. Most recently, as the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world, the Commission led the UN's efforts in fostering dialogue, cooperation and an exchange of experiences and best practices among Member States on STI-related policies to tackle the pandemic.**

**Indeed, science and technology have been central in the global fight against COVID-19. They will be equally important in mending the damage the virus has inflicted on healthcare systems, incomes and socio-economic structures worldwide. Significant financial resources, strategically invested, will be required to ensure that development gains are not reversed.**

**Pandemic recovery gives us an opportunity to fundamentally change course by focusing on three key transitions that are highly dependent on science, technology and innovation.**

**First, speeding up the transition to renewable energy. There is promising momentum towards meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement, but we need the full capacities of science and technology to tackle the challenge of decarbonization, particularly in the global north, while also ensuring access to affordable, reliable and sustainable modern energy, sustainable infrastructure and connectivity in the global south.**

**Second, transforming the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food. We face rising global hunger, increasing demand, an obesity crisis and a seriously degraded natural environment. This cannot go on. The upcoming Food Systems Summit will be a key moment in this effort.**

**Third, ensuring an inclusive digital future. The pandemic has significantly accelerated the digital transition. However, policy interventions are needed now to ensure that these opportunities reach all people, and to prevent any further widening of the digital divide. It is for this reason that the Giga initiative, led by ITU and UNICEF has been launched to connect every school in the world to the internet by 2030.**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Financing will also be critical to the success of these transitions. Some of the funding and innovations can come from traditional sources. But we will also need alternative models, including impact investment, venture capital, crowdfunding, and innovation and technology funds.**

**A multi-trillion-dollar package is needed urgently to help developing countries recover from the pandemic, prepare for future crises, and get on track for progress towards sustainable development. Funding commitments to scale up global initiatives such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator must be honored. Investments are also needed to rebuild and develop the digital and scientific infrastructures of developing countries.**

**I have no doubt that the CSTD will continue its leadership role in providing timely and valuable advice to the United Nations.**

**Thank you.**

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