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**The role of science, technology and innovation in a sustainable and resilient  
recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

Remarks by

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**24th session of the Commission on  
Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)**

17 May 2021, virtual meeting

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Andrejs Pildegovičs,  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United  
Nations, Co-Chair of the 2021 STI Forum**

*High-level round table on the role of science, technology, and innovation in a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic: Contribution of the Commission to the 2021 theme of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development*

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address you here today at this important 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

Ambassador Mohammad Koba from Indonesia and I had the pleasure to co-chair the recently completed, very successful 6<sup>th</sup> annual Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, which convened virtually on 4-5 May.

Through its multi-stakeholder mandate, the STI Forum engaged participants from across the world, and from diverse professional affiliations, on timely topics in the realm of STI for SDGs to inform the upcoming the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Hopefully it also provided valuable insights for other processes and upcoming events this year that focus on food system

transformation, sustainable transportation, energy, biodiversity and climate change.

The Forum had the pleasure to also welcome the Chair of the CSTD Mr. Peter Major and hear his remarks on the Commission's contribution to the analysis of the impact of frontier technologies on sustainable development.

As part of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, this year's STI Forum, addressed crucial topics such as the role of science, technology, and innovation in a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the importance of STI for our well-being and survival, it has also exposed weak interfaces with policy and society, differences in capacities and access, as well as ineffective and often underfunded institutions, pointing to the need to transform our science, technology and innovation systems.

The pandemic has also accelerated digitalisation, along with its now well-recognized impacts, both positive and negative. These provided lifelines for many, but inequalities in access to technology also got translated into inequalities in access to education, other essential services or livelihood opportunities. This acceleration also highlights the need to promote digital literacy and skills, including media and information literacy, through life-long learning.

On the other hand, the crisis fast-tracked innovation in medicines, vaccines, biotechnology, digital technologies and artificial intelligence and emphasized the important role of frontier technologies. Scientific discovery and collaborations increased, boosting open science.

In this context, the STI Forum reviewed STI lessons from the pandemic so far and how the responses of the scientific community must build trust in science support for the economic and social recovery. In the form of virtual exhibit, it also

showcased practical examples of what is possible when innovators combine their creativity and talent to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, underpin the recovery and facilitate achievement of the SDGs.

Other topics covered included the impact of emerging science and technology trends on sustainable development; bridging digital divides, including through digital cooperation; building inclusive innovation ecosystems; advancing the SDGs in-focus at the HLPF through STI; and integrated solutions to global challenges such as climate change. The STI Forum also featured several examples of how the UN Inter Agency Task Team’s joint work can strengthen national capacities and support the development and roll-out of STI policy frameworks, including in promoting women and girls’ access to and inclusion in STI fields.

Additional proposals included the expansion of the online platform “2030 Connect” by adding a database on open-source technologies available to all.

I believe the STI Forum once again underscored the value and critical need of multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnerships – of bringing together all stakeholders that can contribute to unleashing the power of STI to solve global challenges and achieve the SDGs.

I invite you all to visit the STI Forum website where recordings of the sessions and other relevant information can be found.

I am also delighted to advise that the United Nations Secretary-General has appointed a new group of ten renowned experts to support the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism. I trust that they will offer the same valuable support to the next co-chairs of STI Forum as extended by the 10-Member Group supporting this year’s STI Forum.

Finally, it was an honour for me and my country Latvia to serve as the co-chair of STI Forum at this critical moment in time when science, technology and

innovation are the sources of hope and solutions. I and my colleague, fellow co-chair Ambassador Koba, remain committed to promoting and facilitating endeavours which connect science, technology and innovation in support of accelerated progress towards achieving the SDGs in the Decade of Action.

I encourage you to also explore opportunities for joined-up action.

Thank you.