

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

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

Statement submitted by

H.E. Mr. Sorena Sattari  
Vice President for Science and Technology  
Islamic Republic of Iran

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

# **Speech by Dr. Sattari, the Vice President of Science and Technology at the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development(UNCSTD), 24<sup>th</sup> Session**

**17 May 2021**

**In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to thank the UNCTAD for providing opportunity for an international dialogue on common global challenges and paths at the UNCSTD Summit.

Excellencies, Honorable Guests, Distinguished representatives of the countries, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a great pleasure to be here among you, distinguished participants, in this eminent meeting. I hope that the discussions of this meeting will be an effective step towards bringing the views closer in prioritizing global actions and the empathetic cooperation of the countries to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

Also, I would like to pay tribute to the coronavirus victims and wish condolences to the families. It's a great pleasure to see the promising signs of overcoming this challenge as one of the greatest challenges to the health and well-being of people in the modern era.

I think the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is a good starting point for discussing the need to use innovation to serve society; because in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year and a half, the most

promising prospect for resilience has been research and innovation, especially in the field of biotechnology and digital technologies.

As we have seen, during this period of time there was a lot of international collaboration for the development of vaccine technologies between researchers and technology companies from different countries. The private sector, governments and charities have made serious efforts to fund innovation to combat the pandemic. The media and civil society warned governments on the need to disseminate prevention and treatment technologies in vulnerable communities, and in this circumstance, efforts to tackle a global challenge reveal effective results much faster than what we have ever seen before.

In my opinion, the point that shaped the extensive and consistent measures in the field of global crisis management was the shared global view of the direction and priority of collective action. This experience shows us that with enough common will, *innovation* can be one of the most important pillars of international cooperation in dealing effectively with global crises. Now, we know better that the application of innovation to achieve the goals of society, rather than being a concept related to research and technology, depends on the common concerns and perspectives of international players.

Dear colleagues,

We are all familiar with the pivotal role of science and technology in serving the goals of sustainable development, especially the health and wellbeing of societies. But we know that , in the absence of a common will and with a unilateral view, science and technology cannot serve the health and wellbeing of less privileged societies around the world; The bipolar world's access to high-tech products, such as the COVID-19 vaccine, is an evidence of this issue. In my country, due to the capacities of science and technology, a portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines is currently being developed, which I hope will

soon be available to the Iranian nation and the vulnerable nations of the world. However, if the sanctions imposed by unilateral thinking had not limited the international cooperation of Iranian researchers, we would have suffered far less damage from the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, I sincerely state that it is necessary for all of us to create a better world with an open attitude towards international cooperation in the development and dissemination of science and technology and removing political and ideological considerations from the cooperation processes.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me speak here about the experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran in using innovation to support the transition of society towards sustainable development.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been known as a land rich in natural resources and cultural heritage in public opinion. This fact, on the one hand, has provided us with vast possibilities for the development of the country, and on the other hand, it warns of the danger of dependence on past resources and unsustainable and irresponsible use of the environment.

My country has long faced a challenge to choose the right path for its future; One way is to create wealth from natural resources and dipping into our savings of the past, and the other way is to create new value and build the future; At this time, I can proudly say that we have taken a new path to build a creative society via the atmosphere we have created in the country over the past decade.

In this new direction, relying on the capabilities of young and creative Iranian forces and with an open attitude to international cooperation, it is possible for our country to achieve valuable achievements in various fields of technology, such as aerospace, ICT, nanotechnology, biotechnology, stem cells,

cognitive sciences, renewable energies, and pharmaceutical and medical technologies to take a big step in changing the image of our economy to a knowledge-based economy.

I am proud that my colleagues and I in the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology have been able to represent a new voice for building a creative Iran through innovation and thus bring innovation to the national policy agenda.

As a result of this change, my country has recently shown significant leaps in the international rankings of science, technology and innovation in a short period of time. Over the past 5 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has created successful transition towards creating a dynamic innovation ecosystem and jumped nearly 60 places in the Global Innovation Index, more or less in all aspects of innovation performance at the national level.

Also, in the global ranking of scientific papers, the Islamic Republic of Iran ranked 15th in 2020. This is a prominent example of the success of the country to place among the top 5 countries in the world in the field of nanotechnology scientific publications. And these remarkable successes have all been achieved despite the unilateral and inhumane sanctions imposed on the Iranian nation in recent years.

In its new image, the Islamic Republic of Iran is an economy with smart financial participation and facilitation of the government and a significant share of venture capital financing by the private sector. In this image, there is an acceptable connection between academic research on the one hand and the needs of society and industry on the other. Domestic industries are more motivated to enter higher value chains, and young entrepreneurs have more opportunities to start startup businesses.

Distinguished guests,

Based on the experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran in establishing a link between innovation and society, I have come to believe that the social effectiveness of innovations relies on public participation and cooperation. At international level it means multilateralism in international relations for the realization of the common aspirations of the people of the world, including the 17 goals of sustainable development.

I would like to emphasize that, given the will of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to expand strategic cooperation with various governments in the field of dissemination of innovation; there is a good opportunity to share scientific and technological capacities, manpower, finance and market in the Islamic Republic of Iran. I'm confident that cooperation in this area will be possible through the serious determination and goodwill of the governments of the countries.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your attention to my remarks, and I hope that holding this meeting will provide a good opportunity for friendly and long-term interactions between countries in the fields of science, technology and innovation.

Thank you all for your kind attention