

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-fifth session  
Geneva, 28 March - 1 April 2022**

**Opening Session**

Address by

H. E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile  
President, Economic and Social Council  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN in New York

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.

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Collen Vixen Kelapile,  
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**During the**

**Twenty-fifth session (28 March – 1 April 2022) Of the Commission on  
Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

1. I am honoured to address the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), a critical component of the broad network of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies.
2. The Commission is once again meeting against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, with the use of science, technology and innovation (STI), particularly frontier technologies in developing vaccines and medicines, some parts of the world are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.
3. Nevertheless, unequal access to the vaccines will continue to slow our recovery—which will remain fragile, until the vaccines are equitably made available across the globe.
4. By now, the critical role of STI in making progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is universally acknowledged. This recognition has been vividly brought to light in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where STI solutions have been deployed to fortify the resilience of communities worldwide.

5. In this context, the CSTD has a significant contribution to make. As the United Nations torch-bearer and focal point for STI for development, the Commission provides a unique platform for countries to work together on an international agenda, and to build partnerships around it, to harness STI to achieve the 2030 Development Agenda.
6. The outcome of your deliberations today and in the following days on industry 4.0 for inclusive development, on the role of STI for sustainable urban development in a post COVID-19 world and on the review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) follow up progress will add value to inform the 2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

***Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

7. Human development in recent decades has been accompanied by rapid changes in technology and an increasing proliferation of digitized devices and services. The pace of change seems likely to accelerate because of ***“frontier technologies”***.
8. These technologies have enormous potential for improving people’s lives and facilitating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But most of these technologies remain out of reach for the poor. This is where multistakeholder partnerships have a key role to play, including Social Media Platforms. All of humanity must have equal access to ICT opportunities the world over especially when the means to do so are available.
9. I should also note that CSTD offers Member States a platform to explore ways of strengthening the science-policy interface at the national and global levels and better coordinate STI-focused international cooperation, including digital cooperation, in the spirit of multilateralism. It also plays a bridge building role to get countries to support each other in building national STI capacity.

**10.** One of the most critical lessons we are learning during the ongoing pandemic is that global solidarity, multilateralism and cooperation are indeed our greatest assets. When we work together, our ability to overcome hardship is unparalleled. An example is the recent global scientific collaboration leading to the amazingly rapid development of effective coronavirus vaccines.

***Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

**11.** Let me underscore that the pandemic has shown us that we no longer can continue our work in a business-as-usual manner. We need to change the way we live, produce, consume, and interact with each other and with nature.

**12.** We need to mobilize science and technology for the shared benefit, and harness our best and boldest ideas to develop innovative solutions to advance the SDGs and bridge inequalities between and within countries.

**13.** In this regard, we need to rekindle a true spirit of multilateralism and international cooperation, and engage in genuine partnerships among all stakeholders. The CSTD should be fully utilized in this effort.

**14.** Let me close by commending the outstanding work of the Commission over the years, not only for its substantive contributions, but also for its systematic effort to collaborate with other actors in the ECOSOC system and in the UN family at large.

**15.** I wish you a successful session, fruitful discussions, and look forward to receiving the outcomes of your deliberations.

**Thank you.**