

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-eighth session
Geneva, 7-11 April 2025**

**The role of science, technology, and innovation in advancing sustainable,
inclusive, science-and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for
Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving
no one behind**

Special address on Pact of Future and STI by

Mr. Guy Ryder
Under-Secretary-General for Policy
United Nations

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

Video speech by Mr. Guy Ryder, USG for Policy

At the Ministerial Roundtable of the 28th Annual Session
of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

10:40 – 13:00, 7 April 2025, Geneva

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Let me start by thanking the Chair of the Commission, the Secretariat hosted by UNCTAD, and all of you participating in today's meeting governments, academia, civil society and the private sector.

I wish I could have been with you in person at this 28th Annual Session of the Commission but I am grateful for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you virtually as part of this at the Ministerial Roundtable.

This meeting comes at an important moment.

Last September, Member States agreed to the Pact for the Future including the annexed Global Digital Compact. They contain ambitious and forward-looking commitments to deliver a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient world.

In 2025, we also mark the twenty-year anniversary of the World Summit on the Information Society—WSIS+20—an opportunity to review and renew our digital cooperation and take tangible steps to close the digital and innovation divides that still persist.

This Commission, and this moment, matter more than ever.

Let me begin by recognizing what is at stake.

Across every Sustainable Development Goal—whether it's food security, climate resilience, clean energy, education, or health—science, technology and innovation are indispensable enablers.

But they are not neutral. Their benefits are not automatic, nor are they equally distributed. And, as we all know, their risks are not imagined.

The Pact for the Future recognizes all of this.

In the Pact's science, technology, and innovation chapter, Member States set out a compelling agenda: to foster open, fair and inclusive environments for innovation; to bridge divides between and within countries; and to scale up support to developing countries so they can harness emerging technologies for their own priorities.

The Pact also calls for action to promote open science, ensure equitable talent mobility, support technology infrastructure in developing countries, and—crucially—to integrate human rights and gender equality into all our work on innovation.

In the Global Digital Compact, there are also equally ambitious commitments for internet connectivity, data standards, and the effective application of human rights in the digital space. The Compact also advances inclusive international cooperation around artificial intelligence—perhaps the most central and intensively negotiated issue in digital cooperation today.

These are not abstract ambitions. They are concrete commitments.

Both of these documents align directly with the work of the Commission.

Indeed, you are already advancing many of these aims. Through your focus this year on digital diversification and technology foresight, the Commission is not only

looking at today's frontier technologies—it is helping Member States prepare for tomorrow's.

Your policy reviews, your foresight analysis and your platform for collaboration are exactly the kind of tools we need to deliver on the commitments of the Pact for the Future.

But we can do more and we must.

Too many people—billions, in fact—still lack access to the most basic technologies. Too many governments still lack the capacity to assess the benefits and risks of new innovations.

And too many innovations, with enormous potential for sustainability, remain locked away by barriers of access, expertise, or cost.

This is where our collective responsibility lies.

So, let me suggest three areas where we can work together in the months ahead.

First, we need to support investment in capacity—not just hardware, but human capabilities. That means more technical cooperation, more training, and more support for policymakers to harness science, technology and innovation for national priorities.

This should include a scale-up in the work of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and an acceleration of capacity building for artificial intelligence skills in developing countries.

It should also be informed by UNCTAD's Technology and Innovation Report for 2025.

Second, we need to promote open and accessible science. Open-source tools. Open data. Shared platforms. These are not luxuries, nor nice to have options, —they are essential public goods, and we must treat them as such.

Here we can leverage UNESCO’s recommendations on open science, the upcoming 4th UN Conference on Open Science in Tokyo, and the work of the Secretary-General’s Scientific Advisory Board.

Third, we need to transform the United Nations system itself into one that is ready to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

This can be accomplished through building new UN expertise in data, digital, innovation, strategic foresight and behavioral science – as set out in the Secretary-General's UN 2.0 vision.

Colleagues,

It is a truism that we live in the most scientifically advanced era in history—and yet billions of people are being left behind.

The contradiction is not in the science. It is in how we choose to use and share it.

The work of this Commission can help tip that balance—toward cooperation over fragmentation, inclusion over exclusion, and equity over inequality.

Let us approach WSIS+20 with confidence and ambition.

Let us use the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact as a catalyst for action.

And let us ensure that science, technology and innovation truly work in the service of people and planet.

Thank you.