

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

**Opening plenary**

Special Address by

H.E. Mr. Bob Rae  
President, Economic and Social Council  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN in New York

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**Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)  
President of the Economic and Social Council**

Opening segment of the 28th session of the Commission on Science and Technology for  
Development (video message)  
7 April 2025

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address you at the opening of the 28th session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

The Commission's work is more critical than ever. We are living in an era of rapid technological advancement, where science, technology, and innovation offer solutions to many of the global challenges we are facing such as climate change, health crises, food insecurity, just to name a few. STI is already such a powerful tool for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yet, we have to admit that not all are profiting equally. Many developing countries face challenges accessing emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, and lack the adequate digital infrastructure and technical knowledge to be full participants in the digital economy.

We cannot leave these gaps unaddressed. Doing so risks deepening inequalities and hindering progress that we've all made towards the 2030 Agenda.

As President of ECOSOC, I am convening a Special Meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss the potential for AI to accelerate sustainable development in the Global South, and the role of investment, capacity-building, and international cooperation in bridging the gaps.



The ECOSOC Special Meeting will lead into the 10<sup>th</sup> multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development – where we will continue this very important conversation.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

This session of the Commission provides a timely opportunity to act on the outcomes of the Summit of the Future. I want to commend the Commission for setting up a multi-stakeholder working group – in line with the Global Digital Compact – that will draw on diverse national perspectives to develop data governance principles.

This year's session will also inform the General Assembly's review, 20 years of implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (the WSIS+20 review).

I extend my very best wishes for the Working Group to successfully complete its work, and I look forward to learning about the outcomes of all of these discussions.

As you deliberate over the coming days, I urge all stakeholders — governments, private sector, academia and civil society — to work together to harness STI for sustainable development.

Thank you so much.