

Keynote/presentation on main outcomes of the Ninth Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum), 2024

**H.E. Ambassador Lassen, Co-Chair of the 2024 STI Forum**

**Session on “Science, technology, and innovation: Triggering transformation and sustaining science-driven solutions” (4:30pm, Monday, 8 July 2024)**

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Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

It is an honor to have served as co-chair of the ninth annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, alongside my esteemed colleague, H.E. Ambassador King.

We find ourselves at a critical juncture facing multiple crises with the SDGs severely off track. Our promise of leaving no one behind is in peril. We face persisting challenges related to extreme poverty and inequalities, rising levels of conflicts and crises, and an existential climate crisis. These compounding and complex challenges force us to reevaluate models of socioeconomic development. Science, technology, and innovation (STI) are vital tools for unlocking collective progress now and for future generations.

The STI Forum in May showcased the myriad ways that science, technology and innovation provide resilient and inclusive solutions to development challenges. Greater detail on these can be found in our co-chair’s summary.

As in previous years, the STI Forum attracted wide participation from the scientific and technological communities, government, civil society, and the private sector, bringing a diversity of ideas and concrete solutions. Over 600

stakeholders registered to attend, in addition to Member State representatives, and many more followed the discussions online.

This year's Forum featured a ministerial session and seven thematic discussions, addressing two strategic areas of focus for the SDGs: artificial intelligence and climate change.

During the sessions, experts shared the latest scientific insights and solutions with a focus on the five SDGs under review related to poverty, hunger, climate change, and fostering peaceful and just societies. The importance of partnerships and bridging gender digital divides were cross-cutting themes.

The real value added of the Forum was the exchange of concrete examples of innovations and technological solutions that have the potential to be shared and scaled up to make a difference for the everyday lives of people and for the health of our planet. The Forum helped connect the local grass-roots level to regional and national decision-makers and private sector partners.

The Forum also hosted the winners of the UN innovation competition for young innovators who presented their local solutions. This underscored the power of young persons as agents-of-change. Among the solutions presented were the world's first off-grid milk pasteuriser, enabling rural dairy farmers in East Africa to pasteurize milk without needing conventional electricity. And a low-cost, portable air pollution detector with the potential of aiding policy makers in making evidence-based decisions to mitigate the effects of air pollution.

In addition, more than 300 scientists and engineers submitted case studies and science-policy briefs ahead of the Forum, with 99 peer-reviewed briefs available on the Forum's website. These briefs demonstrate how the multilateral system can

ensure that the benefits of technology outweigh its risks and negative impacts, focusing on, for example, ethical considerations around AI algorithm development or universal access to the Internet.

Colleagues,  
ladies, and gentlemen,

Among the highlights of this year's Forum was the emphasis on STI in Small Island Developing States. International cooperation and support are crucial for SIDS, which face unique challenges in developing their STI ecosystems, including low levels of investment in R&D and inadequate access to financing. The need to ensure adequate investments in clean-tech and capacity building to spur green transformation was once again illustrated just last week, when Hurricane Beryl hit the Caribbean SIDS and brought with it devastation and misery.

The Forum discussed building sustainable innovation ecosystems in SIDS that align with SDG aspirations, including national research and engineering institutions and infrastructures. It stressed that STI solutions for SIDS must be demand-driven, arising from local experiences and priorities, while fostering diverse partnerships. Systematic efforts are needed to transform SIDS into "Small Island Digital States."

Distinguished delegates,

The newly appointed Secretary-General's 10-Member-Group led the thematic sessions and proposed several impactful policies and initiatives. These include, for example, building a UN collaboration hub for decarbonizing building materials and providing training on STI policies for SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs.

And these are just some of the promising areas of work that the science community stands ready to support.

Excellencies,

The UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism has made significant strides in promoting science-based, solution-oriented, and multi-stakeholder approaches to SDG implementation. However, dedicated regular budget resources commensurate with the mandate and expectations are still lacking for key parts of the Mechanism. This includes participation in the STI Forum, the online technology platform 2030 Connect, mandated activities of the 10-Member-Group, and the extensive work of the UN Inter-agency Task Team.

To conclude, Ambassador King and I would like to express our great appreciation to Her Excellency Paula Narváez, President of ECOSOC, for her trust in appointing us as co-chairs. We also extend our gratitude to H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly; Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Mr. Li; the 10 Member Group; DESA and UNCTAD, and all colleagues in the Interagency Task Team whose dedication was decisive in making this year's Forum a success.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion at this year's HLPF as we build upon the achievements of this year's STI Forum to accelerate progress on the SDGs.

Thank you.