

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

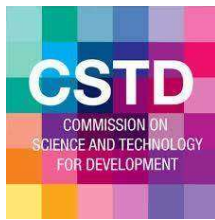
**Geneva, Switzerland  
25-26 October 2022**

**Opening Session: CSTD 2022-2023 Intersessional Panel Meeting**

Welcoming remarks by

Shamika N. Sirimanne  
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## **CSTD 2022-2023 Inter-sessional panel, Opening Remarks by the Head of the CSTD Secretariat**

Ms. Shamika Sirimanne  
Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD  
Geneva, 25 October 2022

*Excellencies,*

*Distinguished delegates,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

As Head of the CSTD Secretariat, I would like to join our Chair in welcoming you to this Inter-sessional Panel, the first to be held mostly in-person since 2019.

Let me begin by thanking 27 Member States and 15 international organizations and other stakeholders for their inputs to the two issues notes. The inputs provided us with valuable insights and demonstrated the contributors' commitments to tackling the challenges that our world is facing in relation to the two CSTD priority themes.

On the priority theme on "Technology and innovation for cleaner and more productive and competitive production," our research shows that these technologies and innovations developed around them can be a catalyst for economic growth and structural transformation, at the same time as they help address the existential threat of climate change. National policies are key to creating these green windows of opportunity. The draft paper presents policies and strategies to exploit these windows of opportunity that several member States have shared with us. Firms and governments have to be ready to respond and take advantage of these opportunities. But many countries are hindered by low levels of technical and financial resources for designing and implementing the required sector-specific strategies. There is, therefore, a critical role for international cooperation to provide this technical and financial support to developing countries for them to benefit from these green windows of opportunities.

Our paper on the priority theme on "Ensuring Safe Water and Sanitation for All: A Solution by Science, Technology, and Innovation," notes that we are not on track to

achieve SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation for all: Data for 2020 shows that 26 per cent of the world's population lacked access to clean water, and 46 per cent lacked access to safe sanitation. The report discusses STI-enabled solutions that are particularly well-suited to help make progress towards SDG 6. This refers particularly to advances in frontier technologies including AI, big data, the Internet of things and nanotechnology. All of them have the water and sanitation sector as a potential primary beneficiary. Other low-tech innovations are equally important as a practical approach in providing safe water and sanitation. The paper also suggests that an active involvement of all stakeholders, particularly in the dissemination of knowledge and the deployment of technology will be critical to ensure access to safe water and sanitation for all.

Let me turn briefly to other areas of our work since the last meeting of the Commission.

In order to revitalize the Commission's Gender Advisory Board, and in response to the decision taken at the last annual session in this regard, just last week we held the first meeting between the secretariat and the members of the Board, which include 6 new experts with diverse background and areas of expertise. A strong interest was visible to advance in the mainstreaming of the gender dimension into all areas of our work. Members of the Advisory Board will engage more actively to support our research and technical assistance work, and to facilitate reaching out to relevant development actors. We have recently added a new item about the Board to the CSTD webpage where you will find details about the history of the Board and the new profiles of the Board members.

On the analytical front, work on our forthcoming flagship Technology and Innovation Report is well advanced. This report, which is closely aligned with the first priority theme of this CSTD session, will analyze the opportunities and challenges faced by developing countries in an age of green innovation as they seek to catch up, reduce inequalities and tackle climate change. It will be launched in the first quarter of 2023 and will be followed by a series of discussions with government officials, experts and think tanks to disseminate its policy messages.

Regarding technical cooperation relevant to the work of the CSTD, I am pleased to report that good progress has been made in our pilot technology assessment project in South Africa, the Seychelles, and Zambia. A comprehensive methodological document that proposes a framework for Technology Assessments in developing countries has been completed and published in our website. National consultative

workshops have taken place in the three countries and a virtual collective capacity building training was organized in the summer. Project implementation is picking up speed as these countries are preparing a solid ground for their technology assessments. I am grateful to our counterparts in the three countries for their commitment to and support for this project.

Turning to STI Policy Reviews, we are going through the final round of validation meetings with stakeholders in Botswana. The review for Botswana must be finalized by this December. Also in Botswana, and as a complement to the STIP review, the technology foresight exercise is undergoing similar validation and will be finalized around the same time. Both reports will be launched at the 26th annual session. We appreciate greatly that the Government of Botswana has fully funded both activities. Additionally, we have launched a STI Policy review for the Seychelles, with the first mission planned before the end of the year.

Furthermore, we have continued to build capacity under the UN's Technology Facilitation Mechanism through IATT's Work Stream 6. The most recent workshop took place just last week, in cooperation with ESCWA. We also continue to cooperate steadfastly with DESA as co-conveners of the IATT and co-organizers of the annual STI Forum.

I am also pleased to highlight the capacity building activities being conducted or planned to strengthen South-South and North-South cooperation under the auspices of the Commission:

The CropWatch Innovative Cooperation Programme, in collaboration with China, is facilitating satellite data based agricultural monitoring in developing countries. To-date, Mauritius has concluded field studies on crop growth monitoring and yield prediction, while Algeria will do the field studies in November. Syria has started customizing the CropWatch monitoring system to its specific needs. Upon completion of these activities, these countries will be able to adopt the CropWatch system for regular crop monitoring.

Within the Young Female Scientist Programme, our partner the University of Okayama in Japan will soon host 14 female scientists from 6 CSTD Member States to engage in cutting-edge research activities. Under the other Young Scientist PhD Programme, so far 3 young scientists from 3 CSTD member States have been selected. We have just announced a new round of call for nominating qualified candidates from CSTD Member States in Africa and Southeast Asia. The deadline is late November.

I am also very pleased to report that UNCTAD and Thailand Science Research and Innovation (TSRI) are collaborating to organize a workshop and training events on the Bio-Circular-Green Economic Model (BCG Model) in Bangkok, Thailand. The training, scheduled for the second quarter of 2023, will target female entrepreneurs and researchers from CSTD member States. They will learn about Thailand's expertise in implementing the BCG model and benefit from an opportunity to share best practices and allow networking among stakeholders.

Finally, UNCTAD is also partnering with Brazil's National Service for Industrial Training in organizing a workshop on the "Use of Advanced Technologies for Family Agriculture" in Recife, Brazil, from 30 January to 3 February 2023. The workshop will be open to experts from CSTD member States and it will cover technological assessment topics, focusing on the management and use of advanced technologies in precision agriculture.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

Before concluding these introductory remarks I would like to emphasize the importance of collective actions, such as those that the CSTD can articulate, promote and support, to effectively use STI to respond to the multiple and global challenges that we face, including the health and socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19, the alarming trajectory of climate change or the food and energy crisis unleashed by armed conflict.

All of them undermine progress towards the SDGs. Global cooperation, particularly around STI, is the only way to address these existential threats. Policies and actions to strengthen the ability of all countries to use STI to solve these issues in an inclusive manner can be a critical contribution of the CSTD. The priority themes of this inter-sessional panel are a vivid example of challenges that disproportionately affect developing countries and the most vulnerable people. I hope that our work this week will help prepare for an annual session in March that will propose concerted actions that engage STI intelligently and effectively to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future.

Thank you.