General Assembly Consultative Workshops on:
**"Development, transfer and dissemination of clean
and environmentally sound technologies in developing countries"**
EXPANDED CONCEPT NOTE
with Preliminary Agendas and Questions for Discussion
for Workshops 1 and 2

## Background

Technology plays a key role in addressing development challenges across a wide scope of cross-cutting sustainability dimensions, as in food and agriculture, water, energy, sustainable industrial development and chemicals and waste management. Technologies and product and process innovations can be major enablers in efforts to address scarcities generated by existing economic and social trends, if also backed by appropriate regulatory and institutional structures. They can make tangible contributions also in the social dimensions of sustainable development such as in the fields of health, education and poverty eradication as a whole. In this regard, generic technologies, which can be used across economic sectors, such as ICTs or biotechnology, have already shown their potential to contribute to sustainable development.

Currently, developing countries display an increasingly complex array of challenges, opportunities and actual outcomes in terms of creation and adoption of technology. The least developed countries as well as a number of small island developing states continue to be severely challenged with respect to science, technology and innovation, and small economies in general tend to be constrained on broader innovation capability building when this requires mastering a wide range of scientific disciplines and engineering skills. On the other hand, a number of middle-income countries today harbour quite well-developed economic structures and rising industrial and technological competencies. Some large and/or advanced developing countries are successfully competing in international trade of environmentally sound technologies, in fields such as the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy and/or food security, which are intended to address global sustainability challenges. South-South cooperation and know-how exchange are acquiring increasing importance.

Any policy advice on development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies needs to take into account the continually evolving worldwide picture of which types of economies face what sorts of difficulties or opportunities regarding access to technologies for sustainable development.

Technology is recognised as a one of the key "means of implementation" in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("Rio+20", Resolution 66/288, paragraphs 269-76), along with finance, capacity building and trade. In response to paragraph 273 of the outcome document, the Secretary General has made recommendations to the General Assembly regarding a technology facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, based on options identified by all relevant UN entities. His report (A/67/348) provided an overview of proposals, outlining recommendations on the possible functions, format and working methods of a technology facilitation mechanism, as well as on a potential global way forward, and has been noted in the resolution on the "Implementation of Agenda 21", adopted by the 67th session of the General Assembly.

Some delegations have expressed the need for more in-depth discussion on options to move forward on this issue. As a result, the General Assembly has decided "to hold a series of four one-day workshops on the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies and the connection between clean and environmentally sound technologies and sustainable development" (A/RES/67/203, paragraph 8).

**Objectives**

The objectives of the workshops, as spelt out in the above resolution, are to identify the technology needs of developing countries, options to address those needs, capacity-building and options for a technology facilitation mechanism, taking into account existing mechanisms. In addition, the Secretary-General has been requested to present a report for consideration by the General Assembly at its 68th session (Sept. 2013 – Sept. 2014) based on the discussions and recommendations from the workshops, including on the way forward, as well as additional inputs from Member States, the United Nations system and major groups.

As stipulated in the resolution A/RES/67/203, the workshops will be organised by the President of the General Assembly, and supported by the Secretariat and the United Nations system with the involvement of other relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, representatives of public research organisations, academics, private sector and non-governmental and civil society organisations.

**Proposed structure of the four workshops as a coherent cycle**

It is proposed to structure the four workshops as an ensemble which, taken as a whole, seeks to meet the four objectives stated above. Individual workshops will address a range of issues of relevance to different countries or groups of countries with similar interests and facing analogous challenges with respect to clean and environmentally sound technology development, transfer and adoption. They will focus on particular aspects of the broader problem so as to enable a more focused discussion.

The first two workshops will focus on identifying technology needs of developing countries in the areas of research, development, demonstration and diffusion. In the first workshop, there will be an emphasis on earlier stages of research and technology development through prototype development and demonstration; in the second workshop the focus will be on moving from demonstration to commercial-scale deployment and broad diffusion. To the extent relevant and appropriate, there will be an effort to highlight the specific difficulties, challenges and opportunities faced by different groups of developing countries in relation to their level of economic development as well as their economic size. Technological capabilities required at different stages of the technology cycle and the capacity development needs of groups of developing countries will also be considered.

The third and fourth workshops will focus on issues at the international level, including opportunities for capacity building, with the third workshop taking stock of existing international structures, institutions and initiatives to facilitate technology development, transfer and diffusion, and the final workshop identifying options for strengthening technology facilitation, building wherever possible upon the existing framework.

*Dates and the themes of the individual workshops:*

| 30 April 2013 | Workshop 1: Technology needs of developing countries and options to address them: *Focus on science and R&D capabilities* |
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| 1 May 2013 | Workshop 2: Technology needs of developing countries and options to address them: *Moving from R&D to widespread adoption of environmentally sound technologies* |
| 30 May 2013 | Workshop 3: Capacity building to enhance the development, adoption and use of clean and environmentally sound technologies in developing countries |
| 31 May 2013 | Workshop 4: The way forward: Strengthening the international architecture for environmentally sound technology development, transfer and dissemination |

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