



# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#HLPF #SDGs [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018)

## 2018 HLPF Thematic review: Advancing science, technology and innovation for SDGs

### Introduction

Member States and other stakeholders agree that science, technology and innovation will be central to the success of the 2030 Agenda. Scientific research, evidence and knowledge can help inform policy and action at various levels. Technology and innovation can help speed up progress, often across multiple goals and targets. At the same time, such developments can also have negative impacts, and collaboration involving a wide range of stakeholders is needed to maximize the positive and reduce or eliminate the negative.

The current session will bring together experts who will present issues related to strengthening the science-policy interface as well as for deploying technology and innovation in the service of SDG implementation. Panellists will discuss the ongoing challenges as well as the enormous potential of science, technology and innovation for the SDGs.

### Background and status

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development established a technology facilitation mechanism (TFM) that Member States agreed “... will be based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders and will be composed of a United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals, a collaborative multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals (STI Forum) and an online platform.” The STI Forum offers the opportunity for dialogue and exchange for a range of stakeholders on STI issues as they bear on the SDGs. The TFM is advised by a 10-Member Group of high-level experts from civil society, the private sector and the scientific community (10-MG) and supported by DESA and UNCTAD together with





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other UN task team members. As per mandate, the meetings of the HLPF will be informed by the summary of the STI Forum.

The co-Chairs of the third STI Forum (held in New York over 5-6 June 2018) and the representatives of the 10-MG will participate in this session.

Paragraph 85 of the outcome document of Rio+20 (“The Future We want”) lists functions for the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), including to “strengthen the science-policy interface through review of documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments”. In July 2016, in the Ministerial Declaration of HLPF, UN Member States agreed that the GSDR would become a quadrennial report drafted by an independent group of scientists (IGS) appointed by the Secretary General. The first such report is under preparation, and it aims to inform the HLPF when it meets in September 2019. The IGS comprises social and natural scientists from developing and developed countries and is preparing its report based on the inputs of a diverse network of scientists and other experts. Representatives from the IGS will participate in the current panel.

## Issues for consideration and guiding questions

Implementing the 2030 Agenda, with its integrated network of SDGs and targets, requires evidence-based policy decisions that cross sectoral boundaries. Policy makers and other stakeholders need to consider the complex systems that define the economic, social and environmental aspects of development, and the interlinkages among the Goals and targets. Business as usual is not a viable option, and decision makers need to identify the drivers that will lead to transformation—whether they are financial mechanisms, individual and group behaviour changes, or other policy levers.

The GSDR will explore these important issues, especially those pertaining to the transformations that are needed to achieve sustainable development, and the pathways that will provide the means of attaining these transformations.

With regard to technology and innovation, several topics come up for discussion. These include the identification, scaling up and dissemination of appropriate solutions; fostering





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innovation in countries' own contexts; learning from traditional and local knowledge; strengthening capacities; developing national roadmaps to direct STI towards the SDGs; eliminating digital divides; and sharing good practices and knowledge across countries and regions. A continuing focus is also the need to stay abreast of the various dimensions of rapid technological change in a multi-stakeholder setting with a view to maximizing their positive impacts and mitigating or eliminating the negative ones for the SDGs.

The STI Forum and its inter-sessional meetings are one such space for exchange and sharing, networking and matchmaking, and it highlights practical means and solutions for science, technology and innovation geared towards the SDGs that are under review at the High-Level Political Forum this year—SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15; as well as progress made on several other instruments within the TFM. It also explores policies and actions for advancing STI for achieving the SDGs.

## Guiding questions for the session include:

1. What is your vision for harnessing science, technology and innovation, in order to achieve sustained and ever improved well-being, as envisioned in the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda?
2. What are the most important challenges and opportunities in this respect?
3. How can we mobilize science, technology and innovation to improve the lives of the furthest behind?
4. What are your top three recommendations for action?

