

**Statement by Bill Gates**

**Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs**

**Convened by the President of UN ECOSOC, H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft**

**June 6-7, 2016; UNHQ New York**

H.E. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the UN General Assembly,

H.E. Oh Joon, President of UN ECOSOC,

H.E. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Excellencies and distinguished guests,

In the past 25 years, the global community has had unprecedented success improving the health and well-being of hundreds of millions of people. Child mortality rates have been halved and diseases once thought to be a death sentence are now preventable or treatable.

These advances have been achieved in part because the world came together around a coordinated global agenda – the Millennium Development Goals – which prioritized the world’s most urgent problems. But not everyone has been touched by these advances or the economic growth that in many instances accompanied it. Nearly 6 million children are still dying every year, mostly from preventable causes. And hundreds of millions of people continue to live in extreme poverty.

There is a critical need for new vaccines and drugs to reduce the burden of infectious diseases. And we must increase innovation in agriculture to improve the yields of crops and livestock – the main source of nutrition and income for 70 percent of the world’s poor.

In wealthy countries, markets create big incentives to invest in research. Companies know in a few months or years if their new ideas will pay off. In poor countries, there is little financial incentive in crucial development areas, so markets don’t always support the speed or scale of innovations for the communities that need them most.

To accelerate progress and achieve the ambitious targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, it’s important that we invest in the bright minds and bold ideas that can deliver the next generation of solutions to people, everywhere. The UN’s Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation is an important step in helping us do that in a coordinated and impactful way.

Together, we must develop and deliver tools that will protect communities from disease, improve agricultural productivity – especially in the face of climate change – and ensure equitable access to sustainable energy. This will require smart investments by all sectors, including governments.

The world has the talent, the scientific firepower, and the technological know-how to create the better world we all want. In the long run, what’s good for people in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia is good for the people of New York, London, and Tokyo.

The challenge – and the opportunity – is to back our good intentions and aspirational goals with the financial resources needed to get the job done.