

**Opening Statement at the First Science, Technology and Innovation
Forum**

10:00am June 6, Conference Room 1

By H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft

President of the 70th session of the General Assembly

(4643 characters, 6-7 minutes, draft by Wen Li)

Mr Secretary-General, Mr President Oh Joon, Co-chairs of the Science
Technology and Innovation forum, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to join you all at this inaugural Science,
Technology and Innovation Forum (STI Forum) and to deliver this
statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr
Mogens Lykketoft.

Just over eight months ago, global leaders adopted the most ambitious
and transformative development agenda the world has ever seen.

Since then, a series of important steps have been taken to get
implementation off to the best possible start.

At the global level, in particular, steps have been taken to strengthen the infrastructure we need to support peer-learning, to mobilize resources and action and to ensure accountability for progress over the next fifteen years.

In March, for example, member states agreed a draft global SDG indicator framework that will be crucial to measuring progress and strengthening national statistical frameworks.

In April, we held the first extended and revamped ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum.

Later this week, member states will sign off on a series of changes that will clarify how the High Level Political Forum will function and help it to fulfil its enormous potential.

And today, with the opening of the first Science, Technology and Innovation Forum, we take another important step forward.

The enormous potential of Science, technology and innovation to drive SDG implementation is undeniable.

But at the High Level Thematic Debate on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals that I organized just a few weeks ago, participants stressed that in spite of the unprecedented progress on STI issues over recent decades, much more needs to be done to harness its full potential.

Significant technological divides remain between countries with only 6.7% of households in least developed countries having internet access as opposed to 81% of those in developed countries.

And similar divides exist within countries, where women, the poor, persons with disabilities and others living in vulnerable situations face great difficulties in getting access to technology or to decision-making on STI development.

In agreeing to establish the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and this Forum in particular, member states agreed that urgent action was needed to dramatically change this situation; and that fresh, open, engaging collaboration at the global level could be a genuine game-changer – helping to create an enabling environment at all levels, helping to mobilize the required resources, and enhancing international cooperation for STI development.

In this regard, there are three crucial areas where this Forum can add significant value.

The first is leadership.

Governments need to accord priority to STI in the implementation of the SDGs, and to adopt a comprehensive STI strategy that is far sighted and integrated into national development plan.

Measures must also be taken to ensure the effective implementation of such strategies.

In addition, STI must remain high on the regional and international development agendas.

Relevant regional and international mechanisms need to build coherence and synergy among their policies and programs so as to provide more efficient and effective support for STI cooperation at all levels.

And the particular needs of the countries in special situations must be addressed as a matter of priority.

The second area is inclusiveness.

For STI development to benefit all people, inclusive participation of citizens including those in vulnerable situations in the decision-making of the STI policies that will impact them, is essential.

It is also important to encourage participation in innovation and entrepreneurship in wider communities, particularly the under-represented groups such as women and youth.

And the third area, perhaps the most critical area, is partnership and collaboration.

This forum can help strengthen STI partnerships that involve all stakeholders, government, multilateral organizations, private sector, civil society and academia.

We have many examples of successful multi-stakeholder collaboration in STI financing, human resource development and technology transfer.

We must build on these and extend their application into broader areas.

To conclude, Ladies and gentlemen, we have a historic opportunity to harness the full potential of technology to deliver a sustainable future for all.

Formidable challenges lie ahead and we have no time to lose.

We must move beyond our traditional differences and work together to advance concrete actions to support our goals.

This STI Forum, which aims to facilitate interaction, matchmaking and the establishment of networks and partnership among all stakeholders, can become a crucial tool in this regard.

I wish you all the best in making this the first of many successful Science, Technology and Innovation forums.

Thank you.