STI FORUM: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION FOR THE SDGs

Remarks byAbby Shapiro, SVP United States Council for International Business

Session 1: Emerging Technology clusters and the impact of rapid technological change on the SDGs

- Thank you. My name is Abby Shapiro, and I am Senior Vice President for Business Development with the United States Council for International Business, or USCIB, a leading business association based here in New York. I am delighted to be here today and for the opportunity to speak on behalf of business – and the essential role it plays in scaling and deploying the promise for society from science, technology and innovation.

- What makes USCIB unique is its focus on international policy and the multilateral system, in which we have been an embedded partner since our founding in 1945. As the U.S. affiliate of several leading international business organizations, including the International Chamber of Commerce and the International Organization of Employers, USCIB provides American business views and solutions to intergovernmental bodies and policy makers worldwide, and works to facilitate international trade and investment.

- This morning I want to talk about two things:

    o The need for a Common Table – I'll explain that in a moment
    o The power of business to drive change

- The pace of change and disruption is running faster that we are. Solutions are needed. No one institution – not business or government – and no one country – has all the answers. And top-down government-imposed policies and regulations cannot keep pace with technological breakthroughs and instead can serve as a drag on development and innovation.

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- At the same time, the scale and ambition of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda creates a tremendous opportunity for the private sector, both to demonstrate the central role it plays in sustainable development and human prosperity, and to serve as an essential partner to bridging the gap in finance and technical capacity necessary to meet the challenge of achieving the SDGs.

- Nowhere is the urgency of this mission more evident than in the areas of science, technology and innovation. Simply put, we cannot come close to achieving the SDGs without the full mobilization of the private sector's capacity and know-how.

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- For this to happen, w**e need all stakeholders around a common table to incubate new ideas for new opportunities, learn from each other without bias and arrive at well-informed and purposeful policy. It is only through a** culture of inclusiveness and transparency that we lower the risk of unintended consequences and increase legitimacy and adoption of policies.

- We need a common language. While we acknowledge that emerging technologies are disruptive, we need to talk about the **potential to harness technologies** to enable and expand economic and commercial opportunities for local communities and non-tech industries and create new jobs.

- We need to respect that **the purpose of business is to create economic value and profit in a way that also creates shared value for society. In other words – by doing well business can do good. When** business connects social issues to its core business – that creates real purpose, real impact and success.

- And we need to create and reinforce new policy frameworks to fully engage the business community in the UN's deliberations and decision-making structures to enable , enable markets, policies and institutions for sustainable innovation and its deployment.

- Our member companies are strong supporters of the UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Four years ago, USCIB launched a global public platform for private-sector engagement in the SDGs called **Business for 2030.org. Businessfor2030.0rg's** purpose is to facilitate sharing of information and raising awareness of the contributions the business community is making to support the SDGs through more than 200 case studies. The site presents the SDGs goal by goal, focusing on the examples of good practice alongside knowledge and resources to encourage and leverage action by others in support of each goal.

- Businessfor2030 illustrates the power of business in deploying the advances in science and technology and promoting innovation through capacity building, education initiatives, public-private research and development partnerships where business works with other stakeholders. Here are some examples:

- Under SDG 6 - technology is revolutionizing the management of water resources, and their integration in water and sanitation projects.

    o *The Coca-Cola Company has committed by 2020 to safely return to communities and nature an amount of water equivalent to what we use in our finished beverages and their production. They are delivering on that commitment through **509 community water partnership projects in more than 100 countries,** partnering extensively with governments, other industry, communities and civil society.*
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- Under SDG 7 - technology is enabling infrastructure expansion and technological upgrades for supplying sustainable energy, such as smart meters that can reduce operational costs while enabling flexible payment options for the poor.

    o *PPL Electric Utilities is advancing more than two dozen research and development projects to explore clean energy technologies, including energy storage and electric vehicles. One of those projects is the Keystone Solar Future Project in partnership with Drexel University,*

> *General Electric, EPRI, and BRIDGE Energy Group to model the effects of distributed energy on the grid.*

- Consider Goal 9 - Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets
  - *In partnership with the public and private sectors, **Citi** led the Tech for Integrity (T4I) Challenge, a global open innovation competition to crowdsource technology solutions that address issues of integrity, transparency and corruption – including the challenges of financial inclusion – from entrepreneurs around the world. Many of the solutions sourced through the T4I platform leverage blockchain, artificial intelligence or biometrics to address last mile payments and verification of identities, enabling access to finance for undocumented and underserved populations.*

- Consider SDG Goal 5, which aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," and calls for enhanced use of technology to promote the empowerment of women.

  - *In Malaysia, **Qualcomm**, the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, Tune Talk Mobile Prepaid and the Foundation for Women's Education and Vocational Training joined forces to enhance womens' skills and knowledge in business and technology through the Mentoring Women in Business Program. The program provides participants with business training along with a mentorship program that empowers and encourages women entrepreneurs*

- The business community is already moving forward on the 2030 Agenda. But we cannot do it alone. To successfully leverage **the power of business to scale and deliver** on the opportunities created by science, technology and innovation national governments and the UN must foster consistent and mutually supportive polices through collaborative and multi-stakeholder initiatives. Business is eager to do more.