

UN GA TECHNOLOGY DIALOGUES, APRIL – JUNE 2014

Suggestions made by participants regarding the functions of a possible technology facilitation mechanism

Background document by the Secretariat for the fourth Dialogue on 23 July 2014

In the first three Technology Dialogues held in April and June 2014 a number of Member States, invited experts and other participants included in their written statements and/or presentations delivered at the meetings some concrete suggestions regarding functions that could be included in a possible technology facilitation mechanism. The following represents a compilation of excerpts from these suggestions. They are presented here with minimal adjustment for editorial purposes.

It is thought that any discussion at the fourth Technology Dialogue on 23 July on concrete steps forward regarding a technology facilitation mechanism would be helped if all participants could see the full range of suggestions made, including overlaps between them as well the differentiation of perspective and emphasis between them. In order to help the dialogue to generate “options”, the suggestions are collected under four types of functions:

1. Heightening information and awareness of existing facilitation activities
2. Improving coherence and synergy between existing facilitation activities
3. Conducting analyses of technology needs and gaps in addressing them
4. Facilitating dialogue and joint action across policy communities and frontiers on technology aspects of sustainability
5. Institutional or process-oriented suggestions regarding next steps in this process
6. Other measures and approaches that could be envisaged

The full set of statements and presentations can be accessed online through: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1822>

Participants may also wish to recall the more detailed proposed functions that have been provided by the UN System organisations in 2012: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/functions.pdf>

PROPOSED FUNCTIONS

1. Heightening information and awareness of existing facilitation activities

Member states

“Promote better coherence, awareness and information sharing.”

“Provide more and better access to public information on existing mechanisms, frameworks and processes.”

“There is a need for information and mapping of initiatives on technology facilitation.”

“Include an electronic knowledge platform incorporating a global database in the technology facilitation mechanism.”

Other participants

“Through a technology facilitation mechanism, promote knowledge sharing and learning, including on lesson learnt, through guidelines, handbooks, etc.”

“Build capacity, especially among LDCs, to be able to utilise the numerous existing online sites with rich data and information available on technology facilitation.”

2. Improving coherence and synergy between existing facilitation activities

Member states

“Minimise duplication, maximise synergy, coordination, and effectiveness, enhance capacity and help those Member States that desire so to learn from and adapt successful strategies.”

“Find ways to better coordinate and share best practices and pursuit of synergy among the large number of existing mechanisms.”

“Welcome efforts to improve coordination and coherence of technology facilitation efforts.”

“Better coordinate and support the implementation of technology-related international commitments, agreements and conventions.”

“Better coordinate capacity-building work by the UN to identify synergies, avoid duplication and improve effectiveness.”

Other participants

“Clarify the respective roles of the many multilateral and bilateral organisations that have launched their own technology initiatives.”

“Through a technology facilitation mechanism, provide for coordination in the technology domain of UN environmental agreements, as well as coordination of actions by the UN System, plus regional development banks, IRENA, GEF, etc.”

“Strengthen coordination between the UNFCCC technology and financial mechanisms, and the technology centres and initiatives of the World Bank and regional development banks. Bring together main alliances in different technology fields, such as REN21 and REEEP on renewable energy. Build on existing collaboration including:

- National Cleaner Production Centres Network (UNEP/UNIDO) – in over 50 countries
- Global Environment Facility (GEF) - COP has requested CTCN-GEF collaboration
- World Bank Climate Technology Program – working together with the CTCN.”

3. Conducting analyses of technology needs and gaps in addressing them

Member states

“Carry out a mapping of technology needs and gaps.”

“Conduct a broad and methodical examination of gaps in technology development, dissemination and adoption, including on basic capacity issues e.g., STEM education, development of innovation ecosystems and the importance of IP.”

“Promote technology needs assessments.”

“Work with countries to identify key technologies that can accelerate sustainable development and provide expert support to facilitate prioritisation of goals.”

“Strengthen ability to understand and address the needs of special country groups regarding appropriateness of technologies (e.g., standard waste disposal technology scale is unsuitable for small scale needs of SIDS), as well as monitoring and evaluation.”

“Conduct horizon scanning on technology needs.”

Other participants

“Promote technology assessments.”

4. Facilitating dialogue and joint action across policy communities and frontiers on technology aspects of sustainability

Member states

“Agree to engage in a dialogue on how to avoid duplication of efforts, if any, and how to better utilise the existing infrastructure through increased coordination and synergies among technology transfer initiatives, programmes and mechanisms already operating within the UN system and under the Rio Conventions (e.g. LDC Technology Bank, the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism and technology transfer provisions under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD).”

“Facilitate the exchange of experiences, best practices and lessons learned across agreements and sectors.”

Other participants

“Build a global network of R&D facilities to enhance the scale and scope of R&D for SD, through:

- the application of state-of-art knowledge;
- long-term perspective in R&D efforts;
- R&D performed by talented individuals drawn from all over the world but with limited-term engagement;
- Lean, state-of-art, institutional design to maximise effectiveness.”

5. Institutional or process-oriented suggestions regarding next steps in this process

Member states

“Establish a technology facilitation mechanism, consisting of:

- A technology development fund, to strengthen global R&D and demonstration cooperation, technology transfer and participation of developing countries;
- Network of technology transfer, innovation and information centres, based on existing global and regional centres, online platforms, clearing houses,

international conventions with technology provisions and economic partnership agreements;

- Network of universities, institutes and research, development and innovation institutions;
- Capacity development programmes and knowledge platforms, and technology needs assessment;
- PPPs including on collaborative IP systems and licensing;
- A management and coordination structure within the UN, including regional and sub-regional cooperative mechanisms and national coordination units, which could be assisted by an advisory team composed of experts and stakeholders.”

“Establish an inter-governmental organ supervising the UN System on technology facilitation matters.”

“Develop national counterpart agencies to work as focal points for the UN technology facilitation mechanism.”

“Establish a global technology platform under the UN, composed of existing inter-governmental technology initiatives, linked with a technology development fund.”

“Establish a global mechanism for STI cooperation geared to the needs of the post-2015 development agenda.”

“The need for an inter-governmental body supervising UN technology facilitation activities is agreed upon (*‘le principe est acquis...’*).”

“A technology facilitation mechanism could be placed under the HLPF and be serviced by DESA.”

“Establish an open-ended inter-governmental working group to decide on the modalities and organisation of a UN technology facilitation mechanism.”

“The HLPF should annually discuss technology facilitation issues.”

“Consider lessons from agencies like UN-water, UN-energy, in designing a technology facilitation mechanism.”

Other participants

“Establish an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Sustainable Development (ARPA-SD), providing:

- Thought leadership in identifying breakthrough technologies to address major challenges;
- Targeted funding to fill gap between research/proof-of-concept and demonstrable proof-of-system prototype; and,
- Efforts to create successful outcomes that can then find application at scale.”

“Establish a global technology facilitation mechanism under UN auspices - as part of or under intergovernmental direction of the HLPF.”

“Ensure the involvement of civil society and the private sector in the technology facilitation mechanism.”

6. Other measures that could be envisaged

Member states

“Ensure political stability and the rule of law, which are prerequisites for technology facilitation.”

“Welcome the proposal to establish a technology bank for the least developed countries.”

“Strengthen enabling environments that are critical for the diffusion and absorption of technology and support non-government actors which are the primary drivers of technological advance.”

“Promote STEM education, including via mobile platforms, online curricula, open source journals, and digital libraries to provide scalable, more tailored, interactive and data-rich approaches to education.”

“Establish a predictable intellectual property regime, with legal frameworks to support the generation and commercialization of ideas.”

“Remove barriers to innovation, including discriminatory trade practices and corruption.”

“Build and greatly expand open international networks of collaboration in research, development and demonstration that allow for the participation of all countries, including the poorest.”

“The Post-2015 Development Agenda should include a stand-alone goal relating to the development of STI.”

“Leverage STI as a powerhouse for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.”

“Pragmatically address intellectual property rights constraints for technology transfer, wherever they exist, by exploring innovative voluntary approaches.”

“Foster truly global, cooperative technology undertakings and partnerships that engage all interested Governments and major groups, including the private sector.”

Other participants

“Build a platform for prize-driven innovation for sustainable development.”

“Take broader measures to promote competition, openness, education, which enable a successful technology and innovation system. Invest in entrepreneurship, innovation, and research.”

“Establish mechanisms providing:

- Direct grants and support to early adopters of SD technologies
- Milestone Prizes and End Prizes
- New international instruments such as pooled funds, etc.”

“Use open innovation approaches in most future international technology cooperation frameworks.”