

## **UN agencies commit to promoting STI for the achievement of SDGs and the post 2015 development agenda**

*Summary of the side event on 13 July 2015 held at the margins of FfD3 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

The Interagency Group, comprised of UNDESA, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, ITU, World Bank and WIPO organized a side event on 13 July, at the margins of the FfD Conference, focusing on the role of science for the achievement of SDGs and the post 2015 sustainable development agenda. The side event was well attended by more than 80 participants in a room with capacity of 60 (see annex for high-level participants).

The event was a contribution to the current intergovernmental discussions on STI as means of implementation for SDGs, including through establishment of a technology facilitation mechanism under the auspices of the UN.

Following up on the opening remarks delivered by Mr Nikhil Seth on behalf of Mr. Wu Hongbo, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Ms Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO pointed to the incredible transformative power of STI. "STI is vital for the creation of knowledge. It is vital for economic growth and for the sustainability of all development" she noted. She then delivered a joint statement on behalf of the Heads of the UN Interagency Working Group on a Technology Facilitation Mechanism reiterating the IAWG's commitment to support the envisaged technology facilitation mechanism, strengthen the UN system inter-agency cooperation on STI and engage all relevant stakeholders in its work.

In the panel discussion that followed, moderated by Mr. Li Yong, Director General of UNIDO, participants, especially MS on the panel (Belgium, France, and Kenya) thanked the IAWG for its work and encouraged it to continue its efforts qua its mandate. They highlighted STI and related capacity building is a crucial means of implementation for the implementation of the SDGs speaking to the universal nature of the p2015 agenda.

Mr. Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Post and Telecom from Belgium, argued that when it comes to means of implementation, financing and STI go hand in hand. He emphasized that technology development takes predominantly place in peer to peer networks and that successful technology dissemination depends on a business case behind the technology application and existing markets. While noting the important role of governments in terms of providing policy and regulatory frameworks (i.e. creating an enabling environment for STI), and the UN system in terms of facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges, he underlined the critical role of the private sector as key stakeholder in the field of STI.

Mr Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN and Co-Facilitator of intergovernmental negotiations on post-2015 development agenda,

argued that with the establishment of the SDGs, development can no longer be seen as a "cooperation effort for developing countries only". Development is now defined as a "transformational experience for the entire world" that will require a very different of engaging with STI - "one that bridges the north south divide". "SDGs are indivisible- it is all or nothing," he said. He also stressed the need to radically change the way in which we engage the market sphere and within it, emphasizing the crucial role of human resources as main driver of innovation world-wide calling for increased efforts to unlock and upscale its potential through an enabling environment. In this context, Mr Kamau argued that STI will be critical in addressing the highly interconnected sustainable development challenges in a comprehensive and integrated way.

Calling for a true multistakeholder effort, Mr. Frederic Bontems, Director for Development and Global Public Goods, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, highlighted the opportunities and challenges of a technology facilitation mechanism, focusing on its three main components: a multi-stakeholder forum on STI for the SDGs; an online platform as a gateway for information on existing STI initiatives, mechanisms and programs; and a UN interagency task team on STI for the SDGs.

The lead discussant, Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, underlined the importance of enhanced UN coordination and the need to use STI for jobs creation and qualitative transformation of growth. The important role of technology to achieve a different quality of growth was highlighted. In this regard, he noted the critical importance of national STI policy reviews.

During the interactive segment, high level representatives of UNEP, World Bank, WIPO, ITU and the Global Forum on Agricultural Research added their perspectives to the discussion, including the question of ICTs, better synergies and learning from successful already existing initiatives. It was emphasized that public institutions should serve as facilitators and not inhibitors of innovation and the central role of the private sector for technology development, application and dissemination was stressed. However, at the same time a private sector participant emphasized the need for governments to set standards. Meeting participants also emphasized that innovation was not limited to high-tech sectors but a cross-cutting issue able to promote sustainable development in all sectors.

In her concluding remarks, Ms Bokova, highlighted that when it comes to the use of STI, including ICTs for SDGs "it is not about *the what* but *how* we use them for addressing the pressing key issues, such as poverty, health, hunger, climate change and environmental degradation".

## **Annex: High-level participation**

### ***High-level representatives from member States:***

BELGIUM: H.E. Mr. Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Post and Telecom, Belgium

KENYA: H.E. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN, Co-Facilitator of intergovernmental negotiations on post-2015 development agenda

FRANCE: Mr Frederic Bontems, Director for Development and Global Public Goods, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France

### ***High-level representatives from the IAWG:***

Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO

Mr. Li Yong, Director General of UNIDO

Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Mr. Hartwig Schafer, Vice President, Operations Policy & Country Services, the World Bank Group

Mr. Elliott Harris, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNEP

Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ms. Dalila Hamou, Director, External Relations Division, WIPO

Mr. Gary Fowlie, ITU Representative and Head of ITU Office to the United Nations