

Activating youth innovators: Pathways to enable youth leadership in STI for the Green Economy

*Side Event at the 26th Commission on Science and Technology for Development
28 March 2023, 08:30-09:45 CET, Online and Palais des Nations, Geneva*

Report

The session explored the role of youth in science, technology, and innovation (STI) in promoting innovation in the sustainable production sector. It consisted of two interactive dialogues addressing green windows of opportunities, drivers for youth engagement, and visions for multi-stakeholder engagement. The panellists discussed the urgency of climate action, the impact of climate change on livelihoods, and the potential of entrepreneurship for addressing climate challenges.

The concept of green windows of opportunities was introduced, encompassing technological, institutional, and market conditions that facilitate the sustainable transformation of economies. However, barriers such as limited access to financial resources, relevant partnerships, and education and training were identified as challenges young social entrepreneurs face.

From the subsequent interactive dialogue discussions, the session highlighted the importance of mobilizing resources, setting collective visions, and effective communication to engage youth in sustainable development. Strategies such as stakeholder mapping and leveraging AI solutions were discussed to overcome barriers and enhance youth engagement. Collaboration between universities, corporations, public support agencies, and banks were emphasised to involve young innovators in public-funded initiatives and bring their products to market.

Skills development and broad-scale opportunities for youth were deemed crucial to boost participation in STI for the sustainable economy while avoiding inequities. The session also emphasized the importance of inter-generational dialogue and cooperation for co-creation and collaboration.

Throughout the session, participants shared examples of green windows of opportunities and innovations in their countries, such as promoting sustainable agriculture and renewable energy. Questions raised by participants focused on mobilizing resources, accessing funding and support, involving young innovators in public-funded initiatives, motivating young people, and resources for learning about sustainability and climate change.

In closing, the session highlighted the importance of open science, equal access to opportunities, a balance between technical and meta skills, impact investments, and public-private partnerships. The panelists expressed gratitude to the participants and encouraged them to continue engaging and following future events.

The organising team would like to thank our panel speakers for their contribution and involvement: Ms Giulia Marzetti, Mr Brighton Kaoma, Ms Fereshteh Rafieian, Ms Damiana Pacheco and Mr Gregory Pepper. We had a total of 111 participants with much interaction, and the team would also like to thank CSTD for providing us with a platform.