**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-sixth session**
Geneva, 27-31 March 2023

**The role of science, technology and innovation in accelerating the recovery
from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels**

Statement by

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**United Nations Commission on Science and Technology
for Development (CSTD)
Twenty-sixth annual session**

**Ministerial Roundtable on
"The role of science, technology, and innovation in accelerating the recovery
from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels:**

Contribution of the Commission to the 2023 theme of the Economic and Social Council
and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the implementation
of its 2022 Ministerial Declaration"

Monday, 27 March 2023, 15:30-18:00 (Geneva time)
Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Speech to be delivered by

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The following questions are proposed to guide the discussions of the roundtable around the theme of accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels:

- How can STI, particularly digital technologies, be leveraged for this purpose, while also addressing the vulnerabilities, inequalities, and systemic weaknesses that the pandemic has revealed?

- What should be done to promote public engagement and foster innovative partnerships with the private sector in this regard?

- What actions could the CSTD and the international community take to strengthen global STI cooperation aimed securing faster progress on SDG 6, 7, 9, and 17?

- Should the CSTD include on its future agenda an item about national experience sharing by countries undertaking a voluntary review at the HLPF on the same year that would address the issue of leveraging STI to accelerate progress and move closer to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to increase their resilience against future crises?

[START]

1   Thank you, *Madam/Mister* Chair.

2

3   *Excellencies,*

4   *Distinguished delegates,*

5   *Colleagues,*

6

7   It has been a little over three (3) years since the coronavirus disease outbreak started.

8   COVID-19 brought unprecedented consequences which includes the setback of efforts

9   and progress made in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

10

11   Although there have been a lot of unknowns and uncertainties about COVID-19, the

12   societies were quick to adopt digital technologies during the pandemic. Unfortunately,

13   vulnerabilities, inequalities, and systemic weaknesses became very evident, if not

14   aggravated. In order to leverage STI and digital technologies to address these local and

15   global challenges, we must first acknowledge the gaps and available resources in our

16   countries.

17

18   In the Philippines, we have harnessed STI through the use of existing technologies,

19   including digital technologies, and repurposing them to respond to COVID-19. This

20   includes the digital disease surveillance and modeling platform called "FASSSTER"

21   initially designed for dengue, measles, and typhoid but was also used to monitor the

22   spread of the COVID-19. Another technology of the Department of Science and

23   Technology is the RxBox, a telehealth device that can monitor the vital signs of patients

24   with data that can be sent to medical doctors. These are being deployed in the local

25   government units of the Philippines, especially in Geographically Isolated and

26   Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) where Rural Health Units and their people have limited

27   access to basic healthcare services. This became even more important as it was used to

28   monitor COVID-19 patients to lessen exposure of healthcare workers at the height of the

29   pandemic. Lastly, we developed Safe, Swift, and Smart Passage system or "S-PaSS", a

30   travel management system primarily intended to facilitate the safe travel of Locally

31   Stranded Individuals (LSIs), Returning Overseas Filipinos (ROFs) Emergency Travelers

32   (ETs), and other travelers during the pandemic and in consideration of restrictions.

33

34   The development of new and repurposing of existing innovative solutions could contribute

35   in solving pressing issues. To utilize digital technologies, infrastructure and universal

36   internet access should be put in place. Platforms, programs, and activities should be

37   inclusive and targeted to eradicate the root causes of social and economic challenges.

38

39

40 Governments, especially, should develop policies and projects that would help address
41 vulnerabilities and inequalities.

42

43 The public and private partners must be involved in the initiatives, from ideation to
44 implementation and evaluation. Assessment of the stakeholders' needs and the barriers
45 they are facing would be crucial in designing *"tailor fit"* interventions which, in turn, would
46 also foster innovative partnerships among different sectors in the society. In order to
47 sustain economic development and lessen the impacts of future pandemics to the
48 achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Philippine
49 government, through the DOST, is establishing the Virology and Vaccine Institute of the
50 Philippines (VIP) which will build the country's capacity to develop and manufacture its
51 own vaccines.

52

53 *Excellencies*, the Philippines supports the Ministerial declaration of the High-Level
54 Segment of the 2022 Session of ECOSOC and 2022 High-Level Political Forum on
55 Sustainable Development, particularly in recognizing the primary responsibility of the
56 Governments to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Governments
57 should create enabling environment for different actors in the STI ecosystem to
58 continuously develop technologies and innovations that could be beneficial to the
59 communities.

60

61 The Department of Science and Technology, for example, has supported various R&D
62 institutions, academe, NGOs, startups, and micro-, small-, and medium enterprises
63 (MSMEs) through upskilling their workforce, providing funding, and assisting them to
64 invent and acquire technologies from research to operations. We do this through Small
65 Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program or SETUP, Technology Business Incubation
66 (TBI) Program, Startup Grant Fund Program, and Science for Change Program (S4CP),
67 among others. The Department then deploys outputs of R&D programs such as
68 technologies to communities in need, especially those in the Geographically Isolated and
69 Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs) through our Community Empowerment Thru S&T Program
70 or CEST. Such initiatives may be upscaled on a regional and international level with the
71 help of the CSTD and other international organizations.

72

73 The Philippines further reaffirms its commitment to international cooperation and
74 multilateralism, recognizing that to recover from the pandemic and also achieve SDGs 6,
75 7, 9, and 11, we must collectively determine the common, as much as the individual
76 issues, that the countries are facing, most especially in the developing and least
77 developed countries. Through international platforms such as the CSTD, we can
78 benchmark on the best practices of each other and work together on finding solutions on

79   the global challenges. Mobilize financial resources, share technical know-how, conduct
80   foresight exercises, implement joint research and development, capacitate human
81   resources, and transfer technologies. These are what we can do hand-in-hand.
82
83   The Philippines supports the inclusion on the CSTD's future agenda an item about
84   national experience sharing by countries undertaking a voluntary review at the HLPF on
85   the same year that would address the issue of leveraging STI to accelerate progress and
86   move closer to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to increase their resilience
87   against future crises.
88
89   The Philippines is open for collaborative programs in science, technology, and innovation.
90   We believe that through our joint efforts, we can recover from the pandemic and
91   accelerate the progress in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, while leaving no one
92   behind.
93
94   Thank you.
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96
97   [END]
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99   **Word count: 862 words**
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101   **Time limit:** 10 minutes
102   *for high-level Ministerial speakers and participants in the meeting room*