# II. G. Science, technology, innovation and capacity building

1. Science, technology and innovation (STI) have advanced at an unprecedented scale and pace, amplifying its contribution in sustainable development. However, its full potential is constrained by persistent inequality in innovation and technology access, along with inadequate digital infrastructure and digital public goods. Limited national capacity and insufficient international support further hinder the development and use of technologies, including fintech, for sustainable development. Unregulated technological advances can also have unintended consequences for economic and social outcomes, cause environmental degradation, and worsen gender inequality which emphasizes the need to apply ethical principles in the development of emerging technologies **(PE)**. Coordinated national and international efforts are needed to close digital divides, leverage technological advances for sustainable development, and realize the full potential of digital technology in achieving financial inclusion and financial health.

## Technological advances for sustainable development

1. STI plays a critical role in pursuing sustainable development. However, developing countries, in particular, face challenges in leveraging the potential of STI, further impeding their sustainable development. To realize the full potential of STI, countries need strengthened technical capacity and resources for designing and implementing effective, mission-oriented, multistakeholder STI policy and enhancing national innovation systems. Policy frameworks and regulation should also be strengthened to provide adequate oversight of technology, ensuring it supports sustainable development and the full enjoyment of human rights.

*National innovation systems, including STI4SDG roadmaps*

* 1. We will support countries to develop and implement mission-oriented national STI4SDG roadmaps that foster an enabling environment to incentivize innovations aligned with sustainable development. We will provide support and training on strategic STI governance, regulation, and institutions for STI policy in developing countries, especially countries in special situations.
  2. We call for strengthened competition laws that are adapted to the digital economy, to foster an open, non-discriminatory, fair and inclusive environment for innovation and technological development, and deepened international cooperation between national competition authorities, given the global reach of major technology firms and the impact of regulatory spillover

*Technology transfer, knowledge sharing, capacity building, and financing for STI*

* 1. We acknowledge the role of intellectual property regimes and the application of TRIPS flexibilities in contributing to innovation and sustainable development. We commit to promote and encourage further agreements on technology transfer.
  2. We urge operationalizing the Online University for LDCs to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.
  3. We will facilitate access to STI funds, through capacity building and knowledge sharing, including ensuring that resources are directed to countries and regions with high needs and impacts. We call for the IFIs, international organizations, and development partners to enhance financing and capacity support to STI projects in developing countries, and invite public development banks, in particular, to scale up support for investment in mission-oriented innovation through risk-sharing instruments, public venture capital funds or similar instruments.
  4. We will promote equitable access to AI and ensure adequate financing for capacity building for AI adoption, for development of a regulatory ecosystem that promotes safe, secure, and trustworthy AI systems, and for facilitating developing countries’ participation in the global AI dialogue, while taking into consideration the previous internationally agreed outcomes.
  5. We recognize the potential of biotechnology in addressing global challenges, especially food security, and environmental sustainability. In advancing biotechnology, we will uphold the rights of indigenous and local communities by respecting, preserving, and maintaining their knowledge, innovations, and practices, promoting mechanisms for fair and equitable benefit-sharing; and we will support technology transfer initiatives that enhance the capacities of developing countries **(PE).**

*International cooperation on STI*

* 1. We resolve to enhance national and international cooperation between actors in the STI ecosystems, including MDBs and DFIs, on open science, open data, digital public goods, affordable and open-source technology, education, and collaborative international research and development that ensures access to countries in need.
  2. We commit to strengthen the capacity of the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the Technology Bank for LDCs with adequate resources so they can effectively fulfill their mandates.
  3. We support enhanced collaboration among the STI Forum, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, and other international platforms. This includes promoting digital infrastructure-related knowledge sharing, particularly in identifying investment risks and opportunities, among DFIs and other partners.
  4. We request the Interagency Task Team on STI for the SDGs to undertake an assessment of the major obstacles that hamper international diffusion of technologies for the SDGs, especially green technologies.

## Digital divides

1. The lack of essential digital infrastructure poses a significant barrier for many developing countries, especially countries in special situations, exacerbating the digital divides, including the gender digital divide. Increasing investment in resilient digital public infrastructure and digital public goods is extremely important. Achieving universal connectivity will require mapping out gaps and measures to scaling up investment at the national level with the support of the international community.
   1. We commit to develop financing plans and coordinate investment in digital public infrastructures and digital public goods as part of national financing frameworks, and technical support from partners through country-led platforms. We will support countries in their design of digital infrastructure financing models and impact measurement to close the connectivity gap and improve the quality and affordability of connectivity as called for in the Global Digital Compact.
   2. We will promote access to science and technology for women, youth**,** children and other groups at risk of digital exclusion **(PE)**.
   3. We invite countries to bring projects on digital public infrastructures and digital public goods to the SDG Investment Fair.
   4. Recognizing the increasing risks associated with digitalization, we will promote investments in cybersecurity infrastructure to protect critical information systems and personal data **(PE)**.
   5. We recognize that achieving universal access to digital services remains a significant challenge, particularly for remote and geographically isolated areas. To address these challenges, we will promote targeted investments in resilient infrastructure that bridges the gap between urban and rural regions **(PE)**.

## Digital technology for financial inclusion and financial health

1. The rapid growth of digital technology has improved financial inclusion for individuals and MSMEs. Despite progress, there are still significant gaps in access and use, and new risks, as some fintech companies are not subject to the same regulations as other financial institutions. To fully realize the potential of fintech, complementary investments in technology access, financial and digital literacy skills, infrastructure and regulatory frameworks are needed. Coordinated national policy actions and strengthened international cooperation, especially on emerging issues, are essential to safeguard consumer protection, foster fair competition, ensure financial stability, and uphold financial integrity.
   1. We will support countries in creating enabling domestic environments for development of digital financial services, underpinned by partnerships between local banks and fintech firms to expand financial inclusion services' reach, especially in rural areas, contributing to economic development, the reduction of informality, as well as promoting financial stability without discouraging innovation, with **(PE),** adaptive regulatory frameworks that effectively manage the opportunities and risks of new technologies.
   2. We commit to implement comprehensive and ethical financial and digital literacy programmes that target all segments of society, including women, youth, and marginalised communities, including by mainstreaming these into educational curricula at all levels. To do this, gaps in access to technology will be considered, especially in rural areas, where connectivity and access to devices are limited **(PE).**
   3. We invite relevant stakeholders to the respective sessions of the ECOSOC FFD Forum to exchange knowledge and share experiences and expertise on policy and regulatory frameworks to respond to the development of digital financial services, avoiding silo-style regulation.
   4. We will consider utilizing the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, convened in accordance with the Global Digital Compact, as a platform to discuss governance of fintech, including exploring the development of a set of principles for safe, transparable **(PE)**, equitable, and inclusive development and use of AI in fintech. It is also key to develop ethical and regulatory principles for the use of AI in fintech, ensuring data protection, fairness in algorithms and mitigation of risks associated with digital fraud **(PE)**.
   5. We will promote access to affordable and inclusive digital financial services for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), in urban and especially in rural areas, through the use of innovative tools, including mobile banking, payment platforms and digitalized payments **(PE)**.
   6. We commit to promote the use of emerging technologies, such as, artificial intelligence, in financial services, ensuring that they are based on ethical and responsible principles, protecting human rights, and fostering their inclusion in accessing the services **(PE)**.