**UK statement on II. G. Science, technology, innovation and capacity-building, 14 February 2025**

Advancements in science, technology and innovation are vital for sustainable development and global economic growth. This chapter of the outcome document is one in which great strides have been made in the 10 years since Addis, and the text should reflect these advancements while setting out a plan of capacity building tailored to the diverse needs of developing countries to ensure they feel the benefits of science, technology and innovation, in line with our commitment to leave no one behind. We welcome para 58 and 59. We note that technological advances are beneficial but must be managed to avoid unintended consequences, such as those mentioned here which cause environmental degradation and worsen gender inequality. We could build on this reference to also include the exclusion of persons with disabilities, older persons, and other vulnerable groups. We should, however, balance the language in the section to also focus on benefits, such as deployment of new and existing technologies that are affordable, available and accessible to those most in need.

**Para 59 a):** We would like to see language which recognises that data is both a product of, and an enabler for science, technology and innovation.

**Para 59 c):** We would like to seek clarity from the co-facilitators on what is meant by TRIPS flexibilities so we can clarify how they'd be used to contribute to innovation and to understand what is missing from existing agreements. The UK has pioneered online universities, and recognises their importance in democratising education. We are interested in the proposal for an Online University for Least Developed Countries and request more information on this.

**Paras 59 e) and f):** We would prefer to focus on access to safe, responsible, accessible and inclusive STI projects and policy, rather than just funds. We would also like to strengthen the language on the availability and equity of AI and ensuring developing countries involvement in all aspects of AI.

On international cooperation on STI, we would like to add language to emphasise the importance of equitable partnerships to ensure all voices are heard and given equal value. On digital divides, we would like to see language recognising the barriers to equal access for all, including marginalised groups. We suggest language on a commitment to scale up investment in science, technology, engineering and maths education, and enhance technical, vocational and tertiary education and training. This week we celebrated the 10th anniversary of Women and Girls in Science Day, and this document should reaffirm our commitment to support women and girls' education, training and participation in science and technology, and for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work in these fields. Finally, we are supportive of the language on digital technology for financial inclusion and financial health.

Thank you.

## Annex A: UK language proposals on II. G. Science, technology, innovation and capacity-building

**Para 58:** 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 and the exclusion of persons with disabilities, older persons, and other vulnerable groups. 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.

**Para 59 a):** 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, including the effective use of data as a product and enabler for STI.

**Para 59 c):** 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 technology transfer.

**Para 59 e):** We will support safe, responsible, accessible and inclusive STI projects and policy, 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.

**Para 59 f):** We will promote equitable access to AI and push for sufficient financing for capacity building for AI adoption, for development of a regulatory ecosystem that promotes equitable, available, safe, secure, and trustworthy AI systems, and for facilitating developing countries' participation in the global AI dialogue, including development, use and regulation, while taking into consideration the previous internationally agreed outcomes.

**Para 59 g):** We resolve to enhance national and international cooperation between actors in the STI ecosystems, including MDBs and DFIs, on open science, open access (to publications), open data, digital public goods, affordable and open-source technology, education, and collaborative international research and development that ensures access to countries in need. Throughout, emphasise the importance of equitable partnerships such that all voices are heard and given equal value. Ensure

all outputs from research are included in these principals.

**Para 60:** 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 and disability 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.

**Para 60 a):** 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. We commit to removing barriers to equal access to and use of digital technologies and accelerating efforts to close the gender digital divide.

**Para 60 b):** We will promote access to science and technology for women, youth, and children, and persons with disabilities. We will scale up investment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, and enhance technical, vocational and tertiary education and training, ensuring equal access for women and girls and encouraging their participation therein.