

**Opening Remarks for H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva,  
President of ECOSOC  
Meeting with Major Groups and other stakeholders:  
Science Technology, Innovation, and Engineering  
Solutions for the SDGs: Theory, Practice, and Application**

**3 May 2023, 8:15 – 9:30AM, in person,  
Trusteeship Council Chamber**

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here with you. I would like to congratulate the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders for organizing this important session in connection with the 8<sup>th</sup> Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, which will officially open later this morning.

The STI Forum will provide an official input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July by addressing how science, technology and innovation can drive the implementation of the SDGs that will be under review at the HLPF, namely SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation; SDG 7 on affordable

and clean energy; SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure; SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities; and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals.

Importantly, the STI Forum will take a broader look at the contribution of STI to the overall achievement of all 17 SDGs, as a contribution to the SDG Summit in September. We all have high expectations of that Summit.

We are gathering at a moment when, for the first time in decades, development progress has been reversing under the combined impacts of climate disasters, conflict, economic downturn and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This regression is also reflected in worsening inequalities - within and between countries – as tens of millions of people around the world have fallen into poverty, and hunger and malnutrition are on the rise. Last week, the Secretary-General shared an early version of his SDG Progress report which is quite grim. It indicates that only about 12% of the SDG targets are on track and 30% of the SDG targets with available data have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.

Against this grim backdrop, science, technology, and innovation offers some hope and can offer solutions to bolster economic growth and societal progress and provide the necessary tools to develop innovative solutions for addressing the global challenges. The SDG Progress Report indicates that, in the aftermath of the pandemic, higher-technology industries recovered faster and proved to be more resilient, pointing to the need to promote innovation and technology transfer in a way that benefits all countries.

Dear Colleagues,

The capacity of humanity to use science, technology and innovation to confront crises in transformative ways and to deliver for the public good was made clear during the pandemic. However, the potential for STI to be applied to the SDGs remains vastly untapped.

Major groups, including scientists, academics, civil society organizations, local governments, youth, the private sector, indigenous peoples and many other stakeholders all have critical roles in promoting the full and responsible utilization of technology and innovation for the implementation of the SDGs.

While we count on scientists and academics to develop the innovative solutions needed to address our global challenges, we will

also need to make sure that we also tap into the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples.

NGOs and civil society organizations have an important role as advocates for policies and initiatives that promote equitable access to technology and infrastructure and their responsible use.

On their part, local and regional governments are uniquely positioned to lead on locally relevant and sustainable solutions that can inspire action at all levels. And the private sector is an important source for financing scientific research and pushing the boundaries of innovation.

I am also particularly pleased to see the active engagement of young people in this year's STI Forum - and the overall work of ECOSOC - and I look forward to hearing their new perspectives and ideas including on bridging the digital divide and in promoting digital literacy. This will be a continuation of our discussion from last week.

I look forward to hearing your views and recommendations both today and during the course of next few days and to learn about your experiences, strategies and solutions to ensure that science, technology and innovation can bring about the transformational

changes that are required to make the 2030 Agenda a reality for all, including for those furthest behind.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion now and during the STI Forum.

Thank you.