



**Video message by her Excellency Paula Naváez, President of ECOSOC
for the Africa Dialogue Series 2024**

30 May 2024

I thank the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for convening this Africa Dialogue Series on “Education through Science, Technology and Innovation toward the Africa we want”.

Science, technology, and innovation (STI) are essential for Africa's accelerated development. The African Union's Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy emphasizes the need to strengthen technological capacities, create conducive environments for innovation, and support research and development. Investments in STI are crucial for addressing issues such as climate change, health crises, and economic development.

Despite the rapid digital transformation across Africa, challenges remain, such as underdeveloped digital infrastructure, high mobile data costs, significant digital gender gap, and disparities in educational access across the continent. Education at all levels is vital to prepare future generations for these technological advancements.

As President of the Economic and Social Council, I have committed to advancing transformative policy guidance across the full range of sustainable development issues. Building on the SDG Summit Political Declaration, ECOSOC platforms are advancing SDG 4 and the entirety of the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby enriching the conversations for the forthcoming Summit of the Future.

In May, STI leaders and stakeholders gathered at the ninth session of the annual ECOSOC Multi-Stakeholder Forum on STI for the SDGs. The Forum delivered clear policy messages about the imperative to accelerate the development of robust research, development, and innovation ecosystems, including in Africa. It also underscored the need for effective cooperation at regional and international levels to harness the transformative power of STI for the SDGs.

The 2024 HLPF in July will undertake a vital follow-up and review of progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda of which STI is an important component. The 37 countries presenting Voluntary National Reviews will share transformative policies, new insights and innovations on what is working at the country-level to achieve the SDGs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Africa has completed the first decade of implementing the African Union's 2063 Agenda. Africa's voice will be essential in guiding us in the coming years toward achieving sustainable development.



Looking ahead, the 2024 Summit of the Future and the 2025 Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, along with the second World Summit on Social Development, will highlight the importance of investing in education and STI, while prioritizing the unique needs of nations and communities.

I wish you fruitful discussions and look forward to your continued engagement in ECOSOC's work to support Africa's sustainable development journey.

Thank you.