



Remarks by Ambassador Munir Akram, President of Economic and Social Council and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN in New York, to the Virtual Innovation Exhibit

4 May 2021

New York

Excellencies, innovators, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you so much Mr. Trepelkov and thank you for holding this exhibition.

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused immense suffering reversing hard one progress on many of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It has caused a significant rise in extreme poverty and resulted in loss of jobs, lives, and livelihood.

The world economy has significantly contracted. There is still a little sign of recovery in the developing countries, and they will find it difficult to recover unless and until the COVID-19 vaccines are urgently and equitably made available to everyone, everywhere.

Significantly, it is only science, technology, and innovations that have provided a ray of hope in the form of the vaccine development and the continuity of business through digital technology.



This is a reminder of how vital science, technology, and innovation are to the survival, and the progress of mankind.

This is a moment to recognize and applaud the innovative spirit and the entrepreneurship that are central to advancing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We see today the real life, impacts of innovations in accelerating sustainable solutions to our challenges of ending poverty, of expanding prosperity, and better conditions of life in larger freedoms as the Charter says.

In the current crisis states and communities have leveraged the power of science, technology, and innovation to fight the devastation of the pandemic through new ways of coping, working, learning, accessing services, and maintaining social connectivity.

Many of these solutions conceived and implemented during this crisis will be valuable even when we emerge from the pandemic. Each innovator featured here today has developed or adapted a cutting-edge innovation to sustain and accelerate SDG progress despite the COVID-19 disruption. This will remain relevant beyond the pandemic to help accelerate progress towards one or more of the SDGs.

Let us learn from them and explore ways in which we can help scale up their products and spread the word to a wider global audience.



The Exhibit itself represents the multi stakeholder spirit of collaboration, which is at the heart of the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

I appreciate the teamwork by UN DESA, the Global Innovation exchange, and the Secretary General's 10-member group that has made this exhibit possible.

I also congratulate innovators presented here, not just for their success in this global competition, but also for demonstrating that thinking local is vital for impacting growth.

I thank you.