THE ROLE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN SECURING THE POST-2015 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Non-Aligned Ministerial Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation

23-24 February 2015
Tehran, Iran

Gary Lewis
UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to have this opportunity, on behalf of UNDP and our Administrator Helen Clark, to address this important NAM Ministerial meeting gathered here in Tehran.

As we consider the future of our fragile, endangered planet, the simple truth is that we continue to produce and consume unsustainably.

We live unsustainably.

The resulting man-made climate change produces unpredictable rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, and severe weather events which endanger our societies.

And our resilience.

And, ultimately, threaten our values.

For us to tackle these and many other future challenges, the international community will – in September this year, at the General

Our new SDGs will have a much larger and more diversified aim than the Millennium development Goals which delivered much in terms of poverty reduction, basic health, education and gender equality across the globe.

These new SDGs are more about the way we live. Behave. Invest. Do business. The way we produce and consume.

They are about how to make economies grow sustainably. And how to mobilize and allocate resources. Their purpose is to deliver growth which is both:

- inclusive enough to take care of current generations, and
- sustainable enough to not compromise the prospects for future generations.
And in order to attain these SDGs,

- We will need more **Science**.
- We will need better **Technology**.
- And we will need rapid and relevant **Innovations**.

Science, technology and innovations are crucial to create evidence-based, sustainable development policies in which some of the world’s most pressing problems – including education, health and poverty – can be solved, leading to greater human security.

But, in making this happen, we face several challenges. These include:

1. The slow rate of technological diffusion which is dependent on private investment.
2. Inadequate investment due to volatile global markets and fiscal constraints.
3. Inadequate financing for technology development and transfer.

4. Domestic policy space that is often restricted from international trade and investment regimes.

And finally...

5. Incoherent and weak structures that do not promote innovation especially when it involves public goods.

How can we resolve these problems?

One sure way is to raise awareness among policy-makers about the importance of science, technology and innovation.

Second, we must strengthen our educational institutions and our research and development organizations in all countries.

Third, we must look for new and inspiring places for solutions.

One of these is South-South and Triangular cooperation.
And as we witness the “Rise of the South”, South-South and Triangular cooperation in science, technology and innovation – between both least developed countries and emerging economies – will gain momentum. We must build on that momentum.

In this context, I am pleased to note that Iran will soon host just such a forum bringing together experts from China, Malaysia, Mexico and Thailand – along with their Iranian counterparts – in an interactive forum that will span Government and the private sector.

Such forums help developing countries to combine forces given the under-development of capital markets and the limitation of government funds to stimulate research and development and other learning activities.

So, as we look forward to a future grounded on sustainable development, I say – to all the policy-makers that are present here today –
engage actively in creating a world possessed of peace, justice, human rights, inclusive growth and dignity for all.

I call on our scientific community to again invest your talent and your resources – as you did to support the achievement of the Millenium Development Goals. Now re-set your sights on the future Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

And, finally, to the young generation listening I say:

- bring your enthusiasm,
- unleash your passion,
- and channel your creativity
to deliver a future rich with initiatives in science, technology and innovation.

I would like to thank the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement – the Islamic Republic of Iran – for this invitation to UNDP and Helen Clark and for the opportunity to address this
gathering. I wish this conference every success.

*Tashakor mikonam.*