

Speaking Notes for the Chair of the CSTD

2024 High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development

Side-event “Forging synergies for sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions: The Vienna-based Commissions cooperating with others to advance SDG 3, SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda”

by Ambassador Kah, Chair of the CSTD

(11 July 2024)

Introduction

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to participate in this important discussion on forging synergies for sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions. This is a matter of great interest to me, both professionally and in my role as the Chair of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD). The CSTD focuses on the implications of technology for all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), presenting synergies with many other ECOSOC bodies.

Today, I will focus on how developing internationally agreed principles on data governance can support the achievement of SDGs 3, 16, and the broader 2030 Agenda, particularly through synergies with the work of the Vienna-based Commissions on drug and crime prevention. Our 27th session in April emphasized the critical role of data in achieving these goals, informing my remarks today.

Supporting SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

Data governance is crucial in harnessing the power of data for sustainable development. Internationally agreed principles can ensure that data is managed transparently, inclusively, and with respect for privacy and human rights. This enhances our ability to address global challenges in health, justice, and security.

Effective data governance can revolutionize health outcomes. Robust frameworks for data sharing and collaboration improve disease surveillance, health research, and equitable access to healthcare services. This is vital for addressing global health threats like pandemics and ensuring no one is left behind.

Supporting SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

SDG 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice, and build accountable institutions. Data governance improves institutional transparency and

accountability. Reliable data informs policy decisions, tracks progress, and exposes corruption and human rights abuses, strengthening the rule of law and promoting justice.

Navigating Data-Driven Challenges

Benefiting from data is complex and requires satisfying numerous prerequisites. Disparities in data access and control often exacerbate existing inequalities, disproportionately impacting lower-income nations. This challenges the fairness of the data economy and raises critical questions about power concentration, accountability, and human rights protection. International cooperation on data governance is essential to ensure equitable access to data benefits and to prevent practices that deepen disparities.

Global Data Governance

The UN Secretary-General's report 'Data for Development' advocates for a balanced approach to global data governance, avoiding the impracticality of a single, unified regime. Instead, it promotes a global multilateral, multistakeholder, and multidisciplinary dialogue. Effective data governance requires flexible regulatory frameworks and diverse stakeholder involvement, ensuring that governance accommodates various perspectives and future generations' needs.

It is imperative for governments and all relevant stakeholders to enhance data literacy and bolster domestic capabilities in data analysis and management. Robust frameworks for cross-border data sharing and global data governance are crucial to address challenges like climate change and pandemics effectively. These efforts should create a global landscape where data exchange benefits all parties, significantly contributing to the SDGs.

As we work towards the Global Digital Compact for the Summit of the Future in 2024, the UNCTAD publication 'Data for Development' serves as early input to international data governance debates, promoting an integrated approach to science, technology, and data. In April 2024, the CSTD was tasked to establish a multistakeholder Working Group on fundamental principles of data governance relevant for development under the UN's auspices.

Closing

To conclude, we hold a collective responsibility to shape a future where data serves as a cornerstone for innovation, equity, and sustainable development. Through shared commitment and action, we can harness data's potential for the betterment of humanity and our planet. By forging synergies between the Vienna-based Commissions and other stakeholders, we can create sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions to our most pressing challenges, ensuring that data serves the common good and upholds human dignity.

Thank you for your attention.