

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Coordination Segment

Session on: Transformative policies to accelerate implementation of SDG6 on clean water and interlinked SDGs, with a focus on climate action and financing

Talking point of Mr. Mansour Al-Qurashi,
Acting Chair of the CSTD

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(4 minutes)

Question from the chair:

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) will be focusing on “Ensuring safe water and sanitation for all: a solution by science, technology and innovation” as its priority theme in 2023 and has addressed this issue at its intersessional session last October. Could you please share with us what are some technological and innovative solutions to advance SDG6 on clean water and sanitation, and harness the interlinkages with other SDGs?

Thank you Chair,

It is a great pleasure for me to speak as Acting Chair of the Commission on Science, Technology and Development (CSTD).

Science, technology and innovation (STI) can offer effective solutions to the challenges we face in achieving SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation. For that reason, Ensuring Safe Water and Sanitation for All: A Solution through Science, Technology, and Innovation has been selected as one of the two themes for the 26th CSTD.

Scarcity requires us to dramatically improve how efficiently we manage our water resources by maximising the effectiveness of integrated water resource management (IWRM), something technological approaches can be pivotal in achieving not only SDG 6, but also SDGs 3, 5, and 9.

Frontier technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data and Internet of things, can be catalysts in monitoring water and sanitation infrastructure and accelerating the achievement of Goal 6. Solutions that use these technologies, such as smart metering, have proven effective by providing real-time information and customized feedback.

Better forecasting and early warning systems, meanwhile, are crucial to the preparation of responses for the floods and droughts which have become more frequent due to climate change. Implementing technology-based early warning systems and predictive models, including some that rely on drone technologies or deeply integrated earth observation systems, enables early disaster threat prediction, and knowledge as to which areas will be particularly badly affected.

At the 26th CSTD's intersessional panel in October 2022, CSTD member States proposed a number of recommendations on using STI to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 6 on water and sanitation.

1. Technological innovation must be implemented in tandem with policy and governance innovation, social innovation, and process innovation.
2. Technological and innovative solutions must be responsive to people's genuine needs because inaccessible technology is often little better than no technology. Access, which can be broken down into availability, affordability, awareness, accessibility, and the ability for effective use, is crucial.
3. It is crucial to implement policies that support concrete solutions. Though advanced solutions have an important role, effective and affordable low-tech tools for water and sanitation are particularly significant as they are often more appropriate for reaching underserved populations and for implementation in developing countries lacking means to access and maintain complex and costly technology.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude by underlining that we must bring stakeholders from different sectors and backgrounds to collectively find solutions. Global partnerships are crucial not only to support access to STI but also to enhance knowledge-sharing that fosters the scaling up of good practices domestically and internationally. CSTD will continue serving as the focal point in the UN system for knowledge sharing, consensus building, and securing synergies between organization-wide initiatives to leverage STI for development.

Thank you very much for your attention.
