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Statement submitted by Unnayan Onneshan, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Developing and least developed countries lag far behind developed countries in terms of scientific knowledge, innovation and technological development, as reflected in their share of researchers, publications, patents, royalties and licensing fees.

Unnayan Onneshan believes that equalization in this regard is important. There are broadly two ways of achieving the goal. The first approach is to forge monitorable, reportable and verifiable international partnerships and mechanisms for the transfer of technology and dissemination of knowledge from developed to developing countries. Second, public investment has to be increased manifold due to endemic market failures and systemic weaknesses of private enterprises.

Investment in science, innovation and technology is different from other investments because it creates multiplier effects and positive externalities in society, even when these have not been done for any particular outcome.

Private enterprises have different objectives and are in most cases not mindful of sustainable development for their intrinsic purposes. Although the allowance of monopoly rents and intellectual property rights are pursued as incentives for the private sector to innovate, these serve little purpose in bringing about global equalization. Rather, they create an unequal burden through monopolies and oligopolies and fall short of addressing coordination failures, namely, to make complementary investments as and when required. Public funding, therefore, becomes an essential solution.

Most developing countries have been burdened with structural bottlenecks and supply-side constraints in making the required levels of investment in science and innovation, though these are critical for them to catch up.

The North has made numerous promises in different international agreements to transfer technologies to developing countries, but these have never moved beyond public relations and have not been actionable through adequate resources and compliance mechanisms.

Unnayan Onneshan, therefore, makes the following recommendations to advance scientific and technological progress throughout the globe in order to pursue the right to development for an equal, just and sustainable world:

At the global level

(a) Institute an international body and legal mechanism, with a compliance system, for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of rights to development, equity and justice, and in accordance with differentiated responsibilities, reflecting levels of development and capacities. Developed countries shall be responsible for transferring technologies and innovations to developing countries in view of their specific needs and special circumstances. Least developed countries shall be entitled to special and preferential treatments due to their level in global development;

(b) Launch an additional and predictable fund, with a governance system in favour of the recipients, for the transfer of technology and research and innovative activities in developing countries, with an emphasis on least developed countries, to service their specific needs and special circumstances;

(c) Establish a global regulatory mechanism, with a compliance system, on transnational corporations to ensure technology transfer in the developing world and a system of levy on their transactions.

At the national level

(a) Increase public investment in all areas of science, innovation and technology for an equitable development;

(b) Provide tax and other incentives to encourage the private sector in the areas of research and innovation;

(c) Encourage conservation and the sustainable use of indigenous knowledge.
