International Consultation on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Health-Related Goals - 6-8 November 2017, Rio de Janeiro

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development launched a "Technology Facilitation Mechanism" (TFM) to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The TFM has three components: Interagency Task Team (IATT), with a 10-Member Group from civil society, the private sector and scientific community; a Multi-Stakeholder Forum on STI for the SDGs (STI Forum); and an online platform for information on STI initiatives.

One of the 10-Member Group's tasks is to provide inputs to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and other UN fora, as requested. Health is an integral part of sustainable development and contributes in different ways, as a prerequisite and an indicator. The health sector is a platform where STI paradigms evolve. Thus, synergies among Health, STI and the SDGs are crucial to the 2030 Agenda implementation.

Summary

As a contribution to the TFM, the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ), UN DESA, and UNDP's RIO+ Centre co-organized a three-day meeting on STI for achieving the health-related SDGs and targets. The main objectives were to convene public-health sector stakeholders to discuss STI for the health-related SDGs and to produce recommendations for next year's STI Forum and HLPF. It had the participation of 80 experts from government, the private sector, research institutions, NGOs, and international organizations.

The first day's panels discussed the sustainable development concept, mainstreaming STI, the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs as an opportunity for health advancement, and experiences on online platforms for technology facilitation. FIOCRUZ launched its Strategy for the 2030 Agenda, signalling its commitment to this new global agreement.

The second day's panels discussed key aspects of innovation and its impact on health, priorities for health-related STI in the 2030 Agenda, STI online platforms, Latin American economic, social and health contexts, indigenous knowledge, next steps for an integrated response on health-related SDGs, and messages for the STI Forum.

The third day focused on social technologies, which are effective, scalable and sustainable solutions to overcome challenges and bring about social transformation. The discussions emphasized the relevance of social technologies for the 2030 Agenda, and the local communities' role as producers of health-related innovations rather than mere consumers. The third day included launching FIOCRUZ's Ágora 2030 platform and RIO+ Centre's We App Heroes, and a panel on lessons from other platforms and their possible interaction with the STI Global Online Platform.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The experts agree that STI have been a key component in the fulfilment of the health objectives, including health equity. They emphasize that health is second to the military sector as the main STI producer and consumer, and in an amplified concept of health (as in the health-related goals), its STI dependency becomes further relevant. Despite this, there is a great divide between health and STI governance at global and national levels leading to a mismatch between STI results and health needs, especially for the most vulnerable. STI from and for the health sector should consider equity and social inclusion, the burden of disease, comprehensive technological assessments, the adequate use of natural resources, and policy integration for effective health interventions, requiring an appropriate policy architecture and financial sustainability. The following conclusions and recommendations emerged from the discussions:

a) *Prioritization:* Progress towards achieving the SDGs could be expedited by identifying priorities that are aligned with the quest for health equity, the WHO's call for the 2030 Agenda implementation, and embedded in national strategies. STI professionals are encouraged to tackle solutions for the achievement of the health-related SDGs. The TFM, through the STI Forum and IATT, should promote the formulation of thematic, global, regional, and national STI Plans, considering these priorities. The meeting called for the creation of a Latin American STI Plan of Action for the achievement of the health-related SDGs.

b) *Interlinkages:* STI for health-related SDGs should harness the interlinkages between health, environment and socioeconomic issues. So, it calls for the adoption of the Social Determinants and One Health approaches;

analyses and initiatives with systemic impact connecting SDG 3 with others; and studies identifying desired scenarios and ways to attain them. The TFM should strengthen the capacity of governments and other stakeholders by promoting exchange on harnessing STI's crosscutting nature, including through the STI Forum, the platform, and IATT's initiatives for cooperation within the UN on STI and health-related capacity-building.

c) *STI creation and diffusion:* The creation and diffusion of STI for health-related SDGs should be facilitated by all stakeholders to ensure progress toward SDGs in all countries and segments. The TFM should continue facilitating knowledge access, and stakeholders are encouraged to support its online platform to advance STI dissemination.

d) *Health system innovation:* Health systems are key to recover and promote health. The HLPF and WHO agree that Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is a main driver to attain SDG 3, and that UHC should include equitable access to quality health care. The TFM should encourage health system innovation and value aggregation to meet this goal.

e) *Emerging technologies and new technological paradigms:* They can have a transformative impact in health-related SDGs. Stakeholders should explore how emerging and accelerated technologies could address health-related challenges such as the new technologies' impact and negative effects on health and health care systems, and conduct assessments. The TFM, through the IATT and 10-Member Group, should promote the preparation of such assessments, and results should be disseminated and discussed via the STI Forum and online platform.

f) *Inclusive technologies:* STI solutions for health-related SDGs should be inclusive and strive to benefit all, focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable. It is crucial to bring science and society closer, and support the participation of local communities as co-creators of health-related innovations, including social technologies. Governments should adopt inclusiveness in formulating STI and health strategies. The TFM should support this, including by promoting the vulnerable groups' participation at the STI Forum and as users/co-creators of the online platform.

g) *Indigenous knowledge:* STI stakeholders are encouraged to harness traditional and indigenous knowledge and frugal innovations to provide appropriate and cost effective STI solutions for achieving health-related SDGs. The TFM should highlight indigenous knowledge and frugal innovations at the STI Forum and online platform.

h) *Scale-up challenges:* Many STI solutions for health-related SDGs fail to scale up. Reasons include a lack of financing mechanisms, market barriers, failure in mobilizing key political actors and conducting public and private partnerships, and cultural norms limiting access to innovations for certain social groups. The TFM should promote the scale up of STI solutions for health-related SDGs, and enhance the capacity to prepare context assessments.

i) *Public perception of STI and SDGs*: The "citizen science" concept, with rich experiences in many countries, should be extended to the TFM. Stakeholders should contribute to a related initiative using all communication forms, especially social media. There are important initiatives to be enhanced, such as the International Science Center & Science Museum Day, and the Tokyo Protocol launched by the Science Centre World Summit 2017.

j) *Health sector as a platform for innovation and development:* The health sector is a key innovation platform in many developed economies. Developing countries are encouraged to formulate policies and strategies to harness the economic and productive potential of health-related innovations.

k) *Previous efforts on health:* The experts noted previous efforts addressing the 2030 Agenda and its health-related SDGs, such as the Shanghai Declaration on promoting health in the 2030 Agenda, STI Forum 2017, and HLPF 2017.

l) *Latin America and Caribbean:* Their recent economic and social trends, which increase structural challenges for sustainable development and social equity, threaten the fulfillment of health-related SDGs. UNDP-LAC, WHO/PAHO and ECLAC should join efforts to connect economic development and health policies.

m) *Call to action:* We urge health sector political leaders to engage with STI sectors to increase the political and financial commitment from governments, private sector and civil society, in order to invest in a research and development agenda that would enable health actions to advance and monitor the implementation of the SDGs.

n) *Next steps:* The meeting's participants agree to continue the collaboration on STI and Health for the 2030 Agenda, and call upon UN DESA and FIOCRUZ to follow-up and bring the main messages to higher levels, including the STI Forum and HLPF, and implement further activities to promote STI for health-related SDGs as part of the TFM.