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Opening remarks by H.E. Peter Thomson, Briefing : Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum for the SDGs

H.E. Ambassador Shava, President of ECOSOC,
H.E. Under-Secretary-General Wu,
H.E. Ambassador Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya,
Dr. Vaughan Turekian, Science and Technology Adviser to the US Secretary of State,
Ms. Mara Murillo, Senior Programme Officer, UNEP,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, thank you to Ambassador Kamau and Dr. Turekian – the Co-Chairs of the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals for participating in today's briefing.

Thanks also to Ambassador Shava and Under-Secretary-General Wu for speaking today, as well to UNEP for its work in support of the STI Forum.

Today's briefing – as requested by Member States – is being held ahead of the second annual Science, Technology and Innovation Forum, which will take place on 15-16 May, at UN Headquarters.

This year's Forum looks to build on the success of the inaugural Science, Technology and Innovation Forum in June last year, which brought together more than 600 participants from 81 Governments, including more than 350 scientists, innovators, technology specialists, entrepreneurs and civil society representatives.

Today's briefing provides an opportunity for Member States to hear from the Co-Chairs and the organizers of this year's Forum on arrangements and developments.

It will also allow for Member States to participate in an interactive discussion on ways to ensure that this year's Forum is substantive and inclusive, and that it meaningfully contributes to the transformation of our world.

As Governments and partners look to turn the 2030 Agenda into action, the importance of science, technology and innovation in driving implementation of the SDGs on the scale necessary for them to be reached in the next 13 years, cannot be overstated.

Harnessed effectively, science, technology and innovation have immense potential to spur progress on sustainable development— helping developing countries drive green economic growth, and advanced economies shift to more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

The key role of science, technology and innovation across the 2030 Agenda could not be clearer. Whether it be satellites in space helping to monitor, prevent and mitigate natural disasters; or information and communication technology facilitating educational opportunities in remote areas; or advanced driver-assistance systems shaping sustainable cities of the future; or the rising interconnectivity of people driving e-commerce; science, technology and innovation is already shaping the future for people, planet and prosperity.

Science, technology and innovation are not only fundamental to driving implementation of the SDGs, but they also form key targets in and of themselves.

In this regard, the General Assembly’s decision last month to establish a technology bank for Least Developed Countries was an important step in building the STI capacity of these Member States, and in meeting SDG Target 17.8.

Excellencies,

Following the statements by today’s speakers, we will be opening the floor for questions and comments.

I encourage you to take this opportunity to engage with the co-Chairs and panelists on your ideas and expectations for the Forum.

Before handing over to the next speakers, I would like to close by thanking all Member States for attending today. Your support for the Science, Technology and Innovation Forum is fundamental to its success. Please maintain this support, for raising awareness of the Forum’s importance is an essential element in our universal desire to gain momentum in the implementation of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals during the 71st Session.

I thank you.