

**Africa Regional Review in Preparation of the 5th UN Conference on LDCs
Special Session of the UN Technology Bank**

“Empowering LDCs through Science, Technology and Innovation”

February 24, 2021

Dear Moderator Moshe Kao,

Dear Managing Director Joshua Setipa,

Distinguished Country Representatives and Colleagues,

It is our great pleasure to **jointly organize this virtual special session** of the UN Technology Bank for empowering LDCs through science, technology and innovation.

The UN Technology Bank was championed by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs that was hosted in Istanbul in 2011.

The Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action had put forth specific objectives for the entire community, including increasing the productive capacity of LDCs and reducing vulnerabilities. Now on the path towards the **2030 Agenda**, we need even more empowerment and transformation through science, technology and innovation.

Our dedication to the realization of the UN Technology Bank also **represents our dedication to the realization of all SDGs as well as their interlinkages with support from target 17.8**, including a capacity-building mechanism for LDCs.

Since its inauguration in June 2018, the UN Technology Bank has been pursuing a roadmap with this perspective that will **advance the LDCs to a better future**.

As expressed in detail by Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu during the High-Level Opening Session of the Africa Regional Review Meeting this Monday on February 22nd, 2021, **Turkey pursues a humanitarian foreign policy**. Both Africa and LDCs have a primary place in that policy. We strongly maintain the position that the main priority in international development and cooperation should be given to LDCs. And this is only possible with **greater empowerment based on R&D and innovation**.

We further recognize that addressing the additional challenges that are posed by the COVID-19 pandemic requires even stronger support from science, technology and

innovation. Due to COVID-19, at least 71 million more people have entered extreme poverty while severe and moderate food insecurity has increased particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. While about 620 million people still lack access to electricity, satisfying a leap forward will require clean and renewable solutions based on R&D and innovation. Needed leaps are possible only with a **strong focus on technology-based collaboration** as well as co-production for sustainable and inclusive solutions.

- **UN Technology Bank for LDCs and TÜBİTAK Gebze Campus**

The UN Technology Bank for LDCs is situated in the TÜBİTAK Gebze Campus that is at the heart of an R&D and innovation ecosystem with linkages across the world.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the research center of this campus has also coordinated the mobilization of the R&D and innovation ecosystem for vaccine and drug development. This grand effort is mobilized not only for our country but also for the benefit of humanity and particularly the LDCs. The COVID-19 Turkey Platform that represents the strong co-creation based collaboration of 436 researchers across 49 different institutions have now reached the stage of initiating clinical phase studies in 3 innovative vaccine candidates, namely inactive, virus-like particles and adenovirus candidates, as well as 3 new drug candidates. In addition, the COVID-19 data portal has been prepared for the access of the international community.

We are glad to share that in addition to the UN Technology Bank for LDCs that we are hosting, TÜBİTAK on behalf of Turkey has bilateral scientific and technological cooperation with Afghanistan, Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan and most recently Sierra Leone. **Our direct outreach to LDCs has increased during the pandemic.**

Without the smooth integration of the LDCs to the R&D and innovation ecosystem as well as the global economy, it is not possible to mention the possibility of eradicating poverty or reaching sustainable development. This connection is clearer today due to the pandemic. **Our common wellbeing depends on joint, collective approaches.**

As recognized in the recent review of the implementation of priority areas from productive capacities and agriculture to multiple crises and emerging challenges, there are **still significant challenges ahead** that requires greater collaboration.

This is the also the reason why we must focus on building a **healthier, more inclusive, transparent and sustainable world where no one is left behind.**

We need to advance common solutions for sustainable development while closing the digital gap. The UN Technology Bank has a key role in achieving this challenge.

- **The Path Forward and Concluding Remarks**

As recognized in the UN Research Roadmap for COVID-19 Recovery, we are at a turning point in shaping our common future that can be towards sustainable development or otherwise. The direction will depend on our joint collaboration.

From the perspective of TÜBİTAK, this direction will depend on a focus on co-creation and succeeding together. From basic sciences to engineering as well as the social sciences and humanities, we need a collaborative approach to ensure that we produce impact to secure an inclusive and sustainable future that advances the needs and potential of the LDCs. **We hope that our open dialogue will support this approach in a time when it is most needed, and that such dialogue will be used to map out the next 10 years of a collaborative and effective partnership.**

As the host country, Turkey is providing financial support to the Bank in the amount of USD 2 million annually and covers the Bank's office expenses, as well as setting up expenses. Our conviction to the Bank's importance is continuing unabated.

We wish to see increased support to the UN Technology Bank from the development partners and call on LDCs to **benefit from the Bank's work to realize impact.**

True sustainable development requires a future where we transform the concept of LDCs. True sustainable development requires a future where R&D and innovation provides a shared direction to discover new potentials and possibilities to truly transform the future that awaits us all. With these remarks, on behalf of my country and institution, I wish the best for a productive special session in contribution to the Africa Regional Review towards the upcoming 5th UN Conference on LDCs.

Thank you.

Question and Answer Session / Closing Remarks

How can cooperation and collaboration between research institutions and the private sector be enhanced to promote research, development and innovation in the field of science and technology, especially in technology transfer?

Based on the approach that we have been realizing in our ecosystem, **we recognize the importance of integrating actors across the ecosystem in co-creation based approaches.** This involves bringing competences across institutions towards joint targets in common platforms so that is possible to attain impact for new

knowledge generation based on co-creation. It also necessitates new approaches for developing and promoting human resources that are fully equipped with collaborative skills and knowledge to contribute to co-creation based approaches in effective ways.

Diffusing such an approach requires **the design of new tools to mobilize** the ecosystem that is supported with the management of R&D and innovative processes. **Co-creation needs to become a culture of working and succeeding together. Such a culture also involves the strong partnership of research institutions and the private sector.** In our ecosystem, the institutions of the TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center are also taking leading roles in strengthening co-creation based approaches across the ecosystem, including in the COVID-19 Turkey Platform.

The complete process is a complex system and requires strong capacity building to be enable the transformation of science and technology based solutions into socio-economic and environmental impact for sustainable development. Our most recent calls have also included those for joining multiple institutions to support the business plans of entrepreneurs as well as support to technology licensing efforts so that the intellectual property of knowledge providers is transformed into industrial production. In addition, such tools include incentives for areas that will support impact towards clean and resource-efficient development.

These tools based on co-creation can also be used to support the role of the UN Technology Bank across technology seekers and technology holders. More specifically, **such tools can be used to join both sides in co-creation and co-production based approaches** in support of inclusive and sustainable solutions.

We look forward to sharing these experiences with the LDCs **while searching for new, local solutions that are adapted to the needs of each particular ecosystem.** Understanding the ecosystem from an integrated perspective and realizing the opportunities for co-creation for each ecosystem and across ecosystems of the LDCs require a **collaborative and collective co-creation based approach.**

Our vision for the UN Technology Bank is to bring together and realize new opportunities for the LDCs in critical times when moving towards sustainable development requires more effort and more intense collaboration. **We see benefit in increasing our interactions, advancing collaboration models, and supporting the matching of solutions with technology needs and sharing of experiences for co-creation.** The UN Technology Bank provides valuable opportunities for truly empowering the LDCs through advances in science, technology and innovation.

We look forward to continuing our contributions and strengthening co-creation based approaches that involve research institutions, the private sector, and all stakeholders.