THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

01 March 2013

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to Resolution 67/203 on the "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development".

Resolution 67/203 invites the President of the General Assembly to organize, supported by the Secretariat, a series of four one-day workshops on the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies and the linkage between clean and environmentally sound technologies and sustainable development.

I have great pleasure to invite you to participate in the workshops, which will be held at the United Nations Headquarters on 30 April, 1 May, 30 and 31 May at a venue to be announced.

The workshops will seek to identify the technology needs of developing countries, options to address those needs, capacity-building, and options for a technology facilitation mechanism, taking into account existing mechanisms. The Concept Note by the United Nations Secretariat is attached.

More detailed programmes of each individual workshop will be circulated in due time.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Vuk Jeremic

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Dates and the themes of the individual workshops

Workshops 1 and 2 will be held back-to-back on:
30 April and 1 May 2013 at the UN Headquarters, Room CR3, New York City

Workshop 1: ***Technology needs of countries and options to address them: Focus on science and R&D capabilities***

This Workshop will focus on the needs, opportunities and constraints/gaps faced by countries in participating in research and early stage technology development and in moving from R&D to demonstration of environmentally sound technologies.

Workshop 2: ***Technology needs of countries and options to address them: Moving from R&D to widespread adoption of environmentally sound technologies***

This Workshop will focus on the needs, opportunities and constraints/gaps faced by countries in moving from demonstration to widespread diffusion of environmentally sound technologies. It will take a closer look at technology transfer, acquisition and adaptation issues, and at success factors for technology diffusion, adaptation and application.

Workshops 3 and 4 to be held back-to-back on:
30 May 2013 and 31 May 2013 at the UN Headquarters, New York City

Workshop 3: ***Enhancing countries' capacity to access and utilise environmentally sound technologies through international structures, institutions and initiatives***

This Workshop will seek to identity what are the most promising opportunities offered by existing international institutions and programs to facilitate research and development cooperation, as well as more rapid and widespread global diffusion of environmentally sound technologies. It will offer perspectives on how information, capacity or other gaps can be addressed and how existing international arrangements can be further enhanced to foster technology cooperation and transfer

Workshop 4: ***The way forward: Strengthening the international architecture for environmentally sound technology development, transfer and dissemination***

Options for themes to be addressed in the final Workshop include: (i) Enhancing coherence among existing structures, institutions, mechanisms to support environmentally sound technology development, transfer and dissemination; (ii) Strengthening developing countries' participation in international research networks; (iii) Meeting the specific technology development needs of developing countries; (iv) Enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation.

General Assembly
Consultative Workshops on:
"Development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies"
CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Technology plays a key role in addressing development challenges across a wide scope of cross-cutting sustainability dimensions, as in food and agriculture, water, energy, green industrial development and chemicals and waste management. Technologies and product and process innovations can be major enablers in efforts to address scarcities generated by existing economic and social trends, if also backed by appropriate regulatory and institutional structures. They can make tangible contributions also in the social dimensions of sustainable development such as in the fields of health, education and poverty eradication as a whole.

Currently, developing countries display an increasingly complex array of challenges, opportunities and actual outcomes in terms of creation and adoption of technology. The least developed countries as well as a number of small island developing states continue to be severely challenged with respect to science, technology and innovation, and small economies in general tend to be constrained on broader innovation capability building when this requires mastering a wide range of scientific disciplines and engineering skills. On the other hand, a number of middle income countries today harbour quite well-developed economic structures and rising industrial and technological competencies. Some large and/or advanced developing countries are successfully competing in international trade of environmentally sound technologies, in fields such as the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy and/or food security, which are intended to address global sustainability challenges. South-South cooperation and know-how exchange are acquiring increasing importance.

Any policy advice on development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies needs to take into account the continually evolving worldwide picture of which types of economies face what sorts of difficulties or opportunities regarding access to technologies for sustainable development.

Technology is recognised as a one of the key "means of implementation" in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("Rio+20", Resolution 66/288, paras 269-76), along with finance, capacity building and trade. In response to paragraph 273 of the outcome document, the Secretary General has made recommendations to the General Assembly regarding a technology facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, based on options identified by all relevant UN entities. His report (A/67/348) provided an overview of proposals, outlining recommendations on the possible functions, format and working methods of a technology facilitation mechanism, as well as on a potential global way forward, and has been noted in the resolution on the "Implementation of Agenda 21", adopted by the 67th session of the General Assembly.

Some delegations have expressed the need for more in-depth discussion on options to move forward on this issue. As a result, the General Assembly has decided "to hold a series of four one-day workshops on the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies and the connection between clean and environmentally sound technologies and sustainable development" (A/RES/67/203, paragraph 8).

Objectives

The objectives of the workshops, as spelt out in the above resolution, are to identify the technology needs of developing countries, options to address those needs, capacity-building and options for a technology facilitation mechanism, taking into account existing mechanisms. In addition, the Secretary-General has been requested to present a report for consideration by the General Assembly at its 68th session (Sept. 2013 – Sept. 2014) based on the discussions and recommendations from the workshops, including on the way forward, as well as additional inputs from Member States, the United Nations system and major groups.

As stipulated in the resolution A/RES/67/203, the workshops will be organised by the President of the General Assembly, and supported by Secretariat and the United Nations system with the involvement of other relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, representatives of public research organisations, academics, private sector and non-governmental and civil society organisations.

Proposed structure of the four workshops as a coherent cycle

It is proposed to structure the four workshops as an ensemble which, taken as a whole, seeks to meet the four objectives stated above. Individual workshops will address a range of issues of relevance to different countries or groups of countries with similar interests and facing analogous challenges with respect to clean and environmentally sound technology development, transfer and adoption. They will focus on particular aspects of the broader problem so as to enable a more focused discussion.

The first two workshops will focus on identifying technology needs of countries in the areas of research, development, demonstration and diffusion. In the first workshop, there will be an emphasis on earlier stages of research and technology development through prototype development and demonstration; in the second workshop the focus will be on moving from demonstration to commercial-scale deployment and broad diffusion. To the extent relevant and appropriate, there will be an effort to highlight the specific difficulties, challenges and opportunities faced by different groups of developing countries in relation to their level of economic development as well as their economic size. Technological capabilities required at different stages of the technology cycle and the capacity development needs of groups of developing countries will also be considered.

The third and fourth workshops will focus on issues at the international level, including opportunities for capacity building, with the third workshop taking stock of existing international structures, institutions and initiatives to facilitate technology development, transfer and diffusion, and the final workshop identifying options for strengthening technology facilitation, building wherever possible upon the existing framework.