



## **SESSION 4: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Consolidated CSO Statement**

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My name is Ranja Sengupta and I speak on behalf of the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism.

I want to talk about Science, Technology and Innovation as a critical MOI.

Adequate Means of Implementation (MOI) for meeting the 2030 Agenda on SD will involve garnering both domestic and international resources, which are both financial and non-financial. Governments must do their best to put together the necessary MOI, both for themselves and for other needy countries. However, we have seen that areas of international cooperation have failed to yield adequate MOI in terms of promised ODA, fair rules of trade, adequate access to appropriate technology, ensuring development policy space, capacity building support and policy coherence. Experience also shows we cannot depend on private finance to deliver on the SDGs and financing strategies, including partnerships, must be oriented towards ensuring equity, and promoting human rights.

Mega trade agreements such as the TPPA and the proposed RCEP are not only threatening development objectives directly, but reducing the potential for developing countries to gather the necessary resources for meeting development targets.

At the national level, tax-generating opportunities are being thwarted by domination of global tax-cooperation mechanisms by a few countries. Critical areas such as health, education and agriculture are seeing budget cuts.

A particular component of the current MOI discussion is science, technology and innovation (STI). This has been recognized as a crucial instrument especially for developing countries and those with special needs. In fact, 9 goals of the 17 SDGs mention STI in some form. The establishment of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) brings some optimism about improving access.

However, critical issues such as increasing corporatization, commodification, and inaccessibility of science and technology, amid a backdrop of a regressive intellectual property rights regime, must be included for this mechanism to be effective. The SD Agenda must recognize first that science should be part of the global commons, and that technology is not an end in itself but is finally for enabling people to lead better lives. However, in the current framework of IPRs, the people and especially those who are economically or socially weaker, do not either hold IPRs nor do they benefit from it. Medicines & healthcare, as well as seeds, are two clear examples where there is a big push of corporate-led technologies that are not only expensive but most often damaging to people's health and the environment.

At the same time, it should be recognized that there exist different national realities, capacities and levels of development in terms of STI. Due consideration must be given to national policies and



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priorities. Moreover, the development of STI should not impinge on people's freedoms, peace and security, basic human rights and the people's right to development.

The TFM should primarily enable communities to be able to share and benefit from technologies and innovative practices, and not allow corporations to make further profits from it. The TFM must also ensure safeguards and free and prior consent mechanisms for use of traditional knowledge of communities.

At a regional level, we will urge our governments to re-evaluate their gains and losses from trade and investment agreements from an MOI and STI lens. Regional cooperation to regulate the role of corporations, which operate across national boundaries, will also be crucial to avoid adverse impact on development goals. STI offers major opportunities for regional cooperation, and regional mechanisms under the TFM could be set up under the APFSD to support technology sharing among countries.

Finally all discussions and decision-making on MOI and STI in particular at national, regional and global levels must give and give institutionalized space to civil society and the people who it is supposed to benefit. This space must be open to all and not based on a principle of selective engagement with civil society.