Statement from the floor at the first annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum)

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I speak on behalf of my organisation, IT for Change. We would like to comment on two issues with regard to roadmaps for effective policy frameworks.

Firstly, it is important at international and national levels to put the spotlight on the fact that development goals are not reached today, not necessarily due to lack of Science, Technology and Innovation, but because of lack of their appropriate socialisation. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) can therefore establish a new framework that underscores a paradigm of Science, Technology and Innovation **_for_** society, outlining directions for policy, and report back at the next Forum.

This could cover a range of science and technology policy benchmarks relating to poverty, health, education, gender equality, energy, sustainable cities etc. that promote local accountability, highlighting good practices and the not-so-good ones that potentially deepen inequalities.

A reassessment of the proverbial cart before the horse approach that has pushed back the democratic socialisation of science and technology at the margins, privileging a paradigm of technical innovations that rewards the control of the powerful elite and undermines progress and justice is an urgent need.

The second policy issue concerns the Internet. The Internet is not only one of the most revolutionary technologies of our time, but also the most socialised. And precisely for this reason, it is hugely transformative. It is important that this Forum and the TFM take note of the fact that the Internet not only provides us the model of a socialised technology; it is 'the platform' for socialising almost all technologies. The increasing centralisation and corporatisation of the Internet, which was born as a decentralised and community technology, also tells us that socialisation of technology is not an autonomous process. It requires deliberate norm building. Today, monopoly platforms exercise unprecedented control over data that flows through the Internet, usurping it for economic, social and political exploitation.

Big data can catalyse big change only if it belongs to the people, as a commons. The inspiring examples we heard from the distinguished members of the podium today on people working together towards civic intelligence and a citizen driven science, we believe, requires at a foundational level, an unequivocal public goods approach to basic infrastructure and a rights approach to the access and use of digital technologies.

So, the exemplar that the Internet provides – both as the best instance of a people's technology that can be put to service of the SDGs, and as a global and national policy domain requiring continuous policy support to keep it socialised and democratic – is something we believe would be important for this forum and the TFM to take note of.