

Delegation from Malta
Position Paper for the General Assembly Plenary

The topics before the General Assembly Plenary (GA) are: Implementation of the Convention against Corruption; and Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Development. The delegation of Malta recognizes the urgent nature of both topics in both regional and international contexts and looks forward to collaborating with our fellow Member States in the upcoming conference.

I. Implementation of the Convention against Corruption

Annually, corruption has bled a staggering 25% of public funds worldwide. Corruption is negatively affecting every aspect of governments across the globe, particularly including legislation that is allowed by exterior motives. Malta, like many other Member States, has experienced the effects of corruption and recognizes that the effort to eradicate it is a continuous and tedious one. Following the *UN Convention against Corruption* (UNCAC), the Maltese Ministry for Justice, Culture, and Local government released a statement vowing to end corruption in the state at all levels. In spite of the various challenges that corruption poses, The Republic of Malta remains optimistic that international collaboration on implementation methods will be prosperous moving forward.

The Republic of Malta is persistently striving to counteract the negative effects of corruption, and has outlined its strategy within the 2021 *National Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy* (NAFCS), where an institutional framework has been set in place to fight corruption. The Republic of Malta has collaborated with the United Kingdom's *Independent International Anti-Corruption and Organization Center* to create a fair and transparent corruption communication technique, as well as granting equal treatment to people accused of fraud and corruption. Through these efforts, the Republic of Malta has continued its promise given at the *London Anti-Corruption Summit* in 2016 to support a voluntary, accelerated implementation of the provisions within the UNCAC code. Malta recognizes the importance of UNCAC Article 5 and the Omidyar Network's Partnership *Open Contracting Data Standard*, which stresses the importance of transparency in preventing corruption. By the European Union's (EU) 2017 directives on the *Fight Against Fraud* Malta created a Register of Beneficial Owners (RBO) for businesses to improve their transparency between each other and the Maltese government, granting Maltese law enforcement access to valuable information on corruption. Malta supports GA resolution 9/6 *Follow-up to the Marrakech Declaration on the Prevention of Corruption* in 2021, which described the fight for corruption as a reactionary battle, but maintained that precautionary actions have been deemed to be the most effective. With this in mind, the delegation of Malta then partnered with the EU to undertake the *IMF Fiscal Transparency Evaluation* to gauge areas within its own government that need improvement and potentially prevent corruption. Malta has also collaborated with the international community in exposing corrupt practices at the *European Healthcare Fraud and Corruption Conference* in 2008 and the *State of Implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption* in 2017, and emphasizes the effect that independent nations can have on helping each other through policy implementation.

Through regional collaboration, voluntary review, and transparency, Malta feels confident that the international community will be able to properly implement the UNCAC and that corruption will not thrive. Malta strongly recommends that Member States cooperate regionally on policy implementation against corruption to establish strong legal and cultural roadblocks to prevent influence from illicit actors. Malta's NAFCS has also revealed the importance of its national cooperation between the government and other involved organizations as being one of the most effective measures against corruption, and urges Member States to do the same. The Republic of Malta acknowledges the struggle to recover assets that have been lost due to corruption and recommends utilizing the *Stolen Asset Recovery Assistance* (STAR) initiative as a key tool for Member States to recuperate some facet of the damages caused by corruption. Through this initiative, Member states can track where assets travel, along with records, and this can help determine when and where assets were lost. Malta firmly believes that implementing these proactive measures in line with UNCAC will significantly bolster the global efforts in preventing and combating corrupt practices, and looks forward to working together with the international community on healing the wounds that corruption has caused.

II. Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Development

For the majority of the developed world, rapid technological change is threatening to outpace public policy, but even Member States on the cutting-edge are struggling with advancing the SDGs through STI. As recently as 2021, the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) reported that the alignment between STIs and SDGs remained weak. Meanwhile, approximately half of the world is excluded from the benefits of the internet altogether, primarily in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), who are also disproportionately at risk of economic turmoil. This limited access to technology and knowledge, coupled with a significant underrepresentation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), heavily limits the contribution of STI to the advancement of the SDGs. Despite these roadblocks, the Republic of Malta remains hopeful and adamant that STI will contribute noticeably to the advancement of the SDGs in the near future.

Malta first began its journey addressing climate change and global warming in 1988, calling for the adoption of GA resolution 43/53 *Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations of Mankind*. This key initiative fostered the creation of two international legal instruments related to the SDGs, *The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) and the *Kyoto Protocol* (KP), which served as precursors to the 2015 *Paris Climate Accords*. That same year, Malta was instrumental in the development of the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, which constituted a global framework for financing sustainable development and subsequently launched a Global Pilot Programme in 2019 that tested the implementation of concrete roadmaps based on the UN Inter-Agency Task Team's *Guidebook for the Preparation of STI for SDGs Roadmaps*. Malta first supported the connection between STIs and SDGs in the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* in 1992, and then again decades later in the HLPF. In 2018, Malta underwent a Voluntary National Review (VNR) through the HLPF, assessing its progress on implementing the SDGs and highlighting the importance of moving away from mitigation and focusing on prevention. The Republic of Malta outlined a universal development agenda for the international community through its support of GA resolution 70/1 *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and a national vision for the future through *Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050*. Recognizing the importance of international collaboration, Malta has actively engaged with various UN agencies, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), to facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity-building programs focused on bridging the technological divide and promoting inclusive innovation for sustainable development. Additionally, Malta has actively participated in multilateral forums such as the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) to foster global dialogue and cooperation on harnessing the potential of STI to advance the SDGs. The Republic of Malta also strongly supports the research of frontier technologies for the advancement of SDGs and in 2021, helped launch a \$20 million fund to support frontier technology startups. Malta first set up a Sustainable Development Agenda in September 2000 with the signing of the *Millennium Declaration* and inception of the *National Commission for Sustainable Development* and continues to be an active advocate of SDGs as a member of the EU.

The Republic of Malta stresses the importance of cooperation and collaboration between Member States to both achieve the SDGs as a whole and to better align STIs with SDGs for the international community moving forward. Malta urges the international community to aggressively take on SDG 10 *Reduce Inequality* as a key factor to advancing the contribution from STI, especially within LDCs. The feedback from the Global Pilot Programme is also vital to refining the implementation of roadmaps, and the delegation of Malta strongly encourages Member States that haven't done so to join the initiative. *The Progress Report of the Global Pilot Programme on STI for SDGs Roadmaps* stressed the importance of creating platforms for coordination and collaboration between the government and other stakeholders. With this in mind, Malta strongly recommends that each Member State prioritize SDGs in the development of national plans, using several ministries and agencies in the process to encourage involvement and active participation from government and stakeholders. The recent surge of frontier technologies has opened the door for STI to impact SDGs exponentially more, and Malta strongly urges Member States to continue researching and strengthening frontier technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) that can impact sustainable development. The Republic of Malta envisions a future where the benefits of progress are accessible to all, and remains dedicated to forging stronger partnerships and advocating for equitable access to technology.