

# Eritrea's Statement Circulated at the Heads of State and Government Summit of the Group of 77 in Cuba

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البعثة الدائمة لدولة إريتريا لدى  
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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK

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Allow me to first congratulate and commend Cuba, in its capacity as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, for shepherding our group during these difficult months of negotiations at the UN. Want to also thank the people and Government of Cuba for the warm hospitality accorded to my delegation since its arrival in the beautiful city of Havana. Cuba, the symbol of resistance and resilience, remains a beacon of hope for the millions marginalized by an unjust world order.

The Summit is being held under the aptly theme, “Current Development Challenges: Role of Science, Technology and Innovation”, as building resilience against all shocks, requires us to enhance the use of STI to spur development and improve the lives of millions of our peoples, who have been left behind.

The importance of science, technology and innovation for economic development can hardly be overstated. Addressing the technological marginalization is a discussion whose time has come, and members of the G77 and China are endowed with capabilities that can enhance the capacities of those

developing states, the ones that are facing enormous challenges in terms of bridging the digital divide and acquisition of technologies for innovation.

Inequality and the unjust international order have prevented developing states from fulfilling their aspirations, and that has ignited the desire for invention and creation, processes considered to be the purview of the few, leaving the majority who are forced to rely on costly imported technologies as sources of new productive knowledge.

Science, technology and innovation (STI) have been the **main drivers of socioeconomic development, economic growth and industrialization throughout** history, and have been at the core of all major development advances, but meeting tomorrow's development challenges will require long term investments in both research and capacity building efforts to promote sustainable innovation in developing countries. In today's world, innovation can no longer be exported. STI are fundamental to economic growth, and competitiveness in global markets, as well as to the benefit of society in general. and there are many in the global south that are now leading scientific research. Mutually beneficial partnerships are needed to reinforce innovation ecosystems.

Homegrown innovations are also more sustainable. Eritrea recognizes the important role that science, technology, and innovation (STI) in underpinning sustainable economic growth and development, and innovation requires investment from all stakeholders. Science is becoming increasingly important to craft and inform policies, and decision making.

Science, technology and innovation can play a critical role in each and every SDG, including by: fostering access to knowledge; increasing productivity, industrialization, economic growth and the creation of decent jobs; promoting health and access to essential drugs; achieving food security through sustainable, equitable agricultural systems and by raising production and incomes, especially of smallholder farms; promoting renewable energy technologies in order to respond to the dual challenge of reducing energy poverty while mitigating climate change.

While science, technology and innovation are being revolutionized by the rapid evolution of digital technologies, the global digital divide is preventing developing countries from exploiting open science, and from meaningfully contributing to the global research and technology infrastructures, that are needed for collective responses to crises such as pandemics and ongoing climate related crisis all over the world.

For Eritrea, education is key to innovation, and the government has established several technical institutions to address the nation's capacity needs in all critical sectors, such as in agriculture, fisheries and marine, the environment, and water and energy. There is significant untapped potential in the country and strengthening the education and training systems required for generating and using innovations is ongoing.

Development of new production technologies to address food and water security, and innovative health technologies and approaches to address health related issues and bring some measure of progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will require partnership and solidarity with developing countries. No country alone can face the environmental, health, peace and security challenges that will require a global response.

The Government of Eritrea recognizes that globalization is a reality, and that Eritrea must develop the capacity to compete in a global market if she is to realize economic, social, and cultural prosperity. Two essential elements for realizing this vision are creating the human capacity and the technological infrastructure to meet the needs of a global market.

Eritrea has a rich education history with a consistent national priority for literacy and innovation. Dedication to learning, at any cost, helped carry the convictions which lead the Eritrean people to independence. The Zero School and Adult Literacy Campaign helped to unify Eritreans by building a community of learners focused on enhancing knowledge and skills to form a new nation. The “culture of innovation” nurtured during the independence movement is alive

today as Eritrea moves forward in the new Millennium with efforts to provide opportunity for all Eritreans through accessible, equitable, and quality education.

The advancement in digital technologies is profoundly transforming our societies. It presents us with endless possibilities for sustainable development, education, and inclusion. However, with the advancements in technology come new risks—exacerbation of violence against women, amplification of hate speech, and exposure of women and children to transnational organized crimes, including trafficking in persons. The digital divide between developing and developed countries poses a significant challenge to women's participation in technology.

Eritrea recognizes the need to prepare students with the necessary skills and knowledge to leverage the rapid advancement in technology. The government recognizes the importance of investing in STEM education to empower youth and provide them with tools for innovation and growth.

The spirit of innovation remains today, and science and technology can be accessed, but development efforts are stifled by the unequal and unjust world order that insists on dictating its ways, preventing the natural development of states, especially against those who insist on using their own human and material resources to develop their nations. The application of unilateral coercive measures, a violation of the UN Charter and international law, continues to affect the development of many one third of humanity.

Today multilateralism is at risk because of these unilateral measures that pit nations against each other. Eritrea calls on the G77 to raise its voice in all for and reject such coercive measures against its members. Eritrea calls for the end to the brutal 60 year long economic embargo against Cuba, and calls for an end to unilateral coercive measures that are impeding the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and development of our nations.