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PARTNER2CONNECT DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT ROUNTABLE
P2C: INFORMAL CONSULTATION GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT
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KIGALI, RWANDA

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     (Awaiting English translation).
     (Awaiting English translation).
     >> GHANA: Thank you so much. We must thank the
government of the Rwanda to interact in the WTDC for the
first time in Africa. For us, connectivity, and if the
pandemic has taught us anything at all, it is how critical
it is to ensure that every part of this globe is connected
to the Internet, because it is not a luxury. It is a

necessity. It's the only tool which enabled to us enact and work and it is fundamental to sustainable and equitable development of any country, and of the globe as well.

Now, we need to ensure not only partnerships, in our part of the world. Governments are doing what they can to provide Internet access to all sections of their population, however, when we're competing against basic necessities like food, shelter, clothing and health, it appears that sometimes the digital initiatives get pushed a bit to the background, but it is what enabled all these other sectors to work meaningfully, and so it is increasingly becoming an essential infrastructure for all of us, but we need support to put in the digital infrastructure. And it is in the interest of the private sector, the international community to support those of us in the global sense, to develop our digital infrastructure.

If we do it well, Africa with its demographics can provide human resources for the global world of work within the next 10 to 20 years because we have young people who are hungry for knowledge and it is important that we also provide them with the tools to stay connected, and the skills to enable them to utilize this connectivity to the max, and we solve multiple problems if we do that.

So for us, this compact -- this global compact is very timely, and we think that it is important that we move beyond rhetoric to action.

We all understand what the issues are, we preach to the converted here. That's why we are here at the WTDC. What can we do differently so that this is a very, very useful initiative that we wholeheartedly support. But the pledges should not just be for in-country solutions but look at building the digital solutions completely.

For us in Ghana, we are building our networks to our borders to make it easy to connect. I think we have built up to Burkino Faso. And it's not enough that only certain countries are doing well. The Africa is a key part of the global conversation, and should be factored into any considerations that are being made.

Not just because of our populations of least developing countries. We have a few small island states and we have undeveloped countries as well. We represent a microcosm of what's happening in the Global South. And we need to have specific focused interventions for us, from both the private sector and the public sector. What kind of technologies are we going to use? How are we going to

scale up our people, our young people in particular.

How are we going to include them in the arrangements
that we're making? What plans are being made for gender
digital -- narrowing the gender digital divide, providing
skills for our young girls and young women, both those in
school and out of work. It is absolutely critical, because
ICT provides us with a tool to work remotely, safely, and
securely.

Now, while we're looking at digital interventions we
can't forget the security and the trust architecture that
also has to be put in place as well.

We cannot make cyberspace another theater of conflict
and a wild, wild west, more or less.

We do need international rules to guide our
cooperation and a lot of people have said so, several times
but we need some kind of Geneva convention for
cybersecurity, to which all of us would be bound as the
international community.

We can't just sit there and allow cyberspace to also
be used as another theater of conflict, and we all be
unwitting victims because there's no internationally
enforcible rules that guide conduct in that sphere.

We need to build our capacities as well, and not the
little investments that we make in building our capacities
in that area should not also be subjected to the brain
drain that we have seen, where we lose our best to those
who can afford to pay them much more than we can.

So these are all some of the issues that we believe
the summit of the future, which is going to be conducted
next year, should address so that out of that, we can
fashion the rules that will guide our conduct in this area.
Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> Thank you very much, Minister. We noted all of
your preponderances and I think it's a very good input for
this consultation on the Global Digital Compact. And now I
would like to give the floor to Mr. Bakhtiyar.

>> Thank you very much for being a part of this
opportunity. I'm very happy to be part of this informal
conversation.

Yes, I have been hearing the intervention made by our
two sisters, the minister from Burkina and the minister
from Ghana.

I absolutely agree on what has been said. There's so
many ideas that have been said in a very, very concentrated

way.

I believe we should look at it from this angle, it's about the sequences of action. So how are we going to align and to coordinate all what has been said by the different ministers, by the private sector?

I believe we should have an approach from a fundamental. We moved from having connectivity as a need. This is a given. It's accepted. It has to be -- it has to become a basic human right. It has to become a basic human right. It's an infrastructure to support the development of the nation.

Once we agree on that, we are in a situation where technology, we have the ability, we have the expertise to connect everything, everyone, everywhere.

Once we have that layer achieved, then we can start talking about affordability, meaningful connectivity, content development. We will be able to enjoy the benefits of the digital development.

So yes, I would like to respect by what was made by Minister Amina, an important term, which she used is "solidarity" from a private sector perspective, I believe we have to -- of course, solidarity is what should be a commitment.

I do not believe in -- from a private sector perspective, again, because it's driven by profitability. I believe in engagement and commitment. So as such, we need to have different stakeholders sitting around the table, and beside the sequences of the action, a redefinition of the role of each stakeholder.

Yes, capital exists. We can provide investment for developing the infrastructure, but investment needs a return on investment. To have a return on investment, we need the regulatory framework. We need to have the right policies that will incentivize investment.

So when we look at it from this angle, yes we have to sit down to define the role of the stakeholders, and we are now heading into a very complex environment where we have new players coming into play.

I'm talking about, for example, a number of other verticals that today would be sitting on the layer of connectivity.

We all want to enjoy the benefits of the digital development. We all have to contribute to the -- to the expansion of this digital development. So, therefore, yes, everything that has been said is completely right, but at a

point of time, based on some fundamentals on which we have all agreed on, I think there is a need to redefine the role of each stakeholder through a very strong engagement and commitment, and I pose now this point. Thank you.

(Applause).

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

I think it's very important to compare and it's very timely to discuss that and it's very important to prepare well the Summit of the Future which will take place next year. We are involved in a summit this year and really that's such a hurry and because of that maybe some of the things prepared for this are not very well done.

Now, I'm turning to the honorable Minister of South Africa. We will be very happy to hear your opinion on this. Please.

>> SOUTH AFRICA: Thank you. And good morning, thank you for the opportunity to participate on this platform and to share our views.

So let me take you back to the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. In my country and the best of our region, we were preparing for the fourth Industrial Revolution. We were talking about the skills of the future, how to get our societies and community ready for that. And then COVID-19 pandemic hit. We were among first to do the complete lockdown. It meant learners could not go to school. It meant workers could not go to work. It meant small enterprises could not run their businesses.

And we thought in three months, this will be done. Month one came, there -- the numbers were getting higher. Month two, it was not only the infection. It was the deaths. Month three, everybody had known somebody who had lost their lives. But we realized that kids are not able to go to school.

So in South Africa, you have two education systems one public and one private. So the private schools, because these children could afford, they then put online education, eLearning. But the public schools, because of lack of connectivity, the children could not go to school. At some point, we had to take a decision to are we going to write the educational year off?

>> , we have an infrastructure challenge. If you write it off, the next group that -- the core that comes through, you are going to reset the whole country. The minister -- our Minister of Basic Education said, no, then going to do a shift system so one day another group in the

same class go in because we go to the social distance. And
that system, we -- at the end of the year, we had lost
almost -- more than 40% of that year's curricula, which
meant the cohort of learners of 2020 were not ready for the
next class. And it remained that the next class, we
thought 2021 would be better and the 2021 class will have
to catch up from the previous year curricula and then start
with the new year.

We did all the mans but bottom line is that 2021 was
also bad. We had to take a decision that they will go back
to school. The rotation system works. We had to talk to
the teachers to be exemplar.

But if we had been connected and we had connectivity
for all, everybody would have been able to go to school
from there. Again, when companies close, we realized the
economy suffered. We had a reset in our country to the
economic levels of 2016. And we realized we need to get
the economy to work.

So big companies were able to go back to work to make
arrangement for their workers to go back to work, to run
their businesses, managers worked from home and all of
those kinds of arrangements. But small enterprises could
not reopen because they did not have the resources to go
online, but the same question arose, our minister
responsible for small enterprise development.

The same question arose when we did the shutdown.
We've got shops, we have informal businesses. They are run
predominantly by women and young people in rural and
undeveloped and under developed areas or previously
disadvantaged.

The big retail stores were able to operate. You no
longer have to go to store to do the grocery shopping. You
order online and they bring the groceries to you.

You are going to economic exclusion when the affluent
and the big guys, the economic guys are able to continue
with running their businesses. They can sell their food
but an ordinary woman could not sell their food either at
food store. I was running small enterprise development
then. We decided we will allow the puzzle shops to open
and the food and veg stores to open because the bigger food
and veg stores were opened.

We realized if we were connected, the smaller stores
would be better connected to their people.

So all of a sudden, the Fourth Industrial Revolution
was not something that is coming that we are planning for.

It was just here. And we had programs to -- to achieve
connectivity for all, but the pace was backed up. We then
said, do we have the resources within country to do that?
We took a decision that we will connect also the African to
have Internet. So we are lucky. In our sister countries,
we have a very strong telecommunication industry. We have
a strong ICT industry.

        So we checked and we said, we have universal
penetration. We are sitting at more than 170% of networks
in South Africa, but the problem is that you don't have ony
versal access. And that ac -- universal access. And that
access is based on your ability to pay to the connection to
your home and the data that you use.

        We did multiple interventions. So for us,
connectivity is no longer -- the highway has changed. It's
no longer the normal highway, where goods and services are
moved, and people move. The highway has become the
Internet.

        So therefore, everybody must have access to that,
because it becomes -- it determines your access to
education, your access to health, your access to food, your
access to employment and business opportunities.

        But secondly, your ability to afford data is important
because your data has become the next currency. So we then
started to do interventions. So the day before yesterday,
I spoke about our program, easy connect that we want to
connect all South Africans to the Internet by 2024, but we
are also talking about data as a basic resource in the
country.

        We determined electricity as a public good, but
everybody must be given access to -- water and energy. So
we are providing for the basic data. That's what's driving
our work. We are partnered both with the private sector
and we are using that as an opportunity to create the next
industry. We don't want people to come and do it for us.
We have a sector that can do it and it must be monitored.
It's part of the new economy and we must do it. Thank you.
        >> MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Minister. That
means universal connectivity is a public good should be one
of the principles that will guide the Global Digital
Compact.

        Now, I'm turning to you ping.
        >> Thank you so much. It's such an inspiration to
hear from our speakers whether you touched on the very many
important aspects of global connectivity.

So now we will turn to the more active, hear from the audience part of the program today. And we're going to start with a short poll. May I ask the technicians to put the poll up online?

And where some of the important aspects, affordability, infrastructure, digital skills have -- which have been raised by our distinguished ministers and speakers, aspect of the connectivity, are part of what we need to do. So what do you think are the priority areas that need to be emphasized when it comes to the universal. Could the technicians at the back put up the QR code and the poll information?

I think they are looking for that.

Oh, there we go.

And so what you do is you use your mobile phone or devoice. You scan the code. You can rank seven elements of global connectivity, and we'll be able to see the results real live of the audience here, as well as those online.

This is our effort to use technology.

I think you can also start seeing on the screen. I think we need to use present mode on the Mentimete.

>> Is it possible to have the results on one screen and the QR code on the other? Exactly.

Did you manage to -- and so live, you have the results of the voting.

And we all know that these various aspects are all important, but if you really had to choose, how would you rank them?

Again, the QR code and the survey results.

Thank you so much. You can see, number one, there is infrastructure. And number two is digital skills. Thank you so much for your participation. We will also hear from stakeholders from the floor, live participation as to what you think about global connectivity and what you think the Global Digital Compact needs to emphasize in terms of achieving universal connectivity. Here I would like to see if any participant would like to intervene. We have people standing by with portable mics.

If you would like to indicate that you would like to speak.

I see the lady in the front that will be -- I believe that's Jane Kaufman with Connect Humanity. Jane, if you would like to take the floor. I also see some other speakers that I will call on.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you very much. Thank you very much to the honorable ministers Bakhtiyar for this really good panel this morning.

I think for the benefit of the digital compact where civil society can guide the work.

From an infrastructure perspective, I would like to give this concept. Universal connectivity is an enabler and if we say, that people will dismiss us. So digital connectivity is an imperative. I'm using that word as we all must have it.

Essential infrastructure is critical for universal connectivity and digital equity and digital inclusion will lead to a globally interconnected and included society.

As the Minister if Ghana has said, we need to move beyond rhetoric and a holistic approach. That's a holistic approach. It's not just one of those vectors. It's all of them combined together that will lead us to a better infrastructure, globally connected world.

And when we look at the connectivity solutions, we need more connectivity solutions like community networks, municipal networks, social purpose networks.

We all know how to connect people technically, but it hasn't happened so far, and there are 3 billion people still off the grid who aren't connected.

We need those new infrastructure options to be included working very much hand in hand with the private sector. But to reach last mile sector, we need to have new networks. We need policies and regulatory solutions that are creative and along with the policy and regulatory solutions that are creative and innovative, we need financial solutions as Bakhiyar has said. You need a digitally included society, which means digital stewards to help with the sustainability. Thank you.

>> PING: Thank you. I see Nana. I believe she's from the Web Foundation.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you. I'm Nanna. I'm the chief advocate of the worldwide Web Foundation. I want to applaud the input by our ministers and thank you, Mr. Bakhiyar. The first submission I would like to make is that I think the it should focus as full connectivity as a right. That's my first submission.

On the 27th in May, we had the intergovernance forum where we had a consultation on the Global Digital Compact and I would like to intimate with some of things that the west Africans thought. Of course, connectivity was most

important issue for West Africans.

Access to the Internet should now be enshrined in our constitutions. We don't want it just to be voted by ministerial cabinets so it will be recognized. The other thing I would like to put down is the need for civil society engagement on the process and in the content itself. That explains why the worldwide Web Foundation has been organizing networks of organizations to help input. We don't have the same capacity with Member States. We have put up a survey.

So, dear ministers, we held one in Burkina Faso. I went to the market and I met the queen mothers. And so we want to ensure that everyday people who might not be connected would have voice.

Now, to you Ping, when the civil society may have these voices. We pay not be able to have loud speakers during the Summit for the Future but we want to entrust your office to carry our content to to the table of the General Assembly.

Finally as an African woman, I can't emphasis the gender responsiveness. Most of the women who go offline after connecting is because of online gender-based violence. We really need global future that equal opportunities be available to men and women.

If there's any civil society organizations here, willing to collaborate more with the office of UN tech envoy, I'm hear for that. Thank you.

>> PING: Thank you so much, Nanna. I saw a hand in the back. I believe it's a representative from Microsoft. You have the floor.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you, Ping. And thank you to all the speakers today. I thought it was a very inspiring session and I'm a program manager at Microsoft's office in New York. I want to say that we fully support the vision that connectivity should be human-centered and we should focus on other aspects of connectivity, not just coverage maps in order to really include people and that's why we are in favor of excessive access to Internet services and devices, as well as skilling and meaningful connectivity for people to really use that to create better economic opportunities for them.

On the Global Digital Compact, we have been following this process and we will be providing a submission. We are also trying to mobilize all of our partners, all of our stakeholders that we engage with, as well as other

businesses to really support this important process and make sure that connectivity is a very critical part of the Global Digital Compact.

Thank you very much.

>> PING: Thank you to Microsoft. I have a gentleman in front. I think this will be the last intervention before we go to the second round an you will have another opportunity to speak from the floor. If you could introduce yourself, please.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, good morning, gentleman and ladies. Thanks to Rwanda people and the --

>> A bit louder. Closer to the microphone and louder.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Now?

>> PING: I think you need to speak louder and into the microphone.

>> Time from Sudan. I'm the director of regulatory affairs from the private sector. I want to thank the Rwanda people and the government and the ITU and the moderator as well.

What I want to say, that operators and private sector are ready to invest, but the affordability is hinged with the profitability for the private sector.

Sudan has built 100 sites in rural, which are not profitable through projects. What I want to say from the private sector side. The private sector needs incentives to invest and those incentives will help to get affordability for the people.

For the government to collect the indirect revenues will be much better and help to reach the development goals. So tax taxation system and the cost of spectrum and licenses should be adjusted and should be reasonable for them to reach the goals and the country to reach the goals.

So at this stage, I would call the regulators and the governments to look seriously at the costs itself, the indirect costs such as the taxation and the spectrum and the other fees. So would out this, I think operators will not be able to invest. Thank you very much.

>> PING: Thank you very much. Very concrete suggestions there.

So now we have talked a lot about connectivity, but that's not just the only areas that the Secretary-General of the United Nations has proposed that the Global Digital Compact can take up. Can we bring up the next poll. Again, point your QR codes at the screen.

He has suggested that there can be other areas at that

time global digital compact should also take up in terms of global challenges we need to invest as an international community. And so these are the various issues that are also proposed in the common agenda for inclusion in the Global Digital Compact and we want your sense of how important these issues are, to be included in the Global Digital Compact.

How much time? How much text? How many paragraphs should be devoted to this particular issue? And how pressing you think this should inbound what the leaders of governments, civil society, the civil society and the digital companies should address. So if you can rank from 1 to 10, how important do you think these issues, Internet fragmentation, protecting data, treating digital as a global public good. How important do you thigh these various issues should be and addressed in the Global Digital Compact. Rank them on a scale of 1 to 10.

If we could have the results.

I encourage everyone else who is not taking up the phone to use their devices to look at the QR code and again rank these areas.

Is it possible to see the results?

While we're looking at the results and trying to get them up on screen, let me also take a survey of those who would also still like to speak from the floor and perhaps while we are waiting for results to be displayed, we invite colleagues, dear friends would would hike to take the floor on the various aspects the global digital aspect to speak.

I see a hand. I believe that's Elizabeth from the Internet Society?

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you so much. It's a great pleasure to be here today and to hear your views on the common -- on the Global Digital Compact.

My name is Elizabeth Owatch and I'm with the Internet Society which is a global nonprofit organization that is committed to promoting the development of the Internet as a technical infrastructure.

We have been participating? The roadmap on digital cooperation for a number of years and one of the key aspects of this work really has been the multi-stakeholder nature, which I think has been very vital. And that is something that we would like to see continue in this global digital cooperation process, including in the Global Digital Compact. And it's quite important that these discussions, including this one, are taking part as

Partner2Connect, which is open to nongovernmental stakeholders to share their views and perspectives and pledges to really bridge the digital divide and provide meaningful connectivity.

While this is a key to the Global Digital Compact, there is the nature of the issues and the challenges that the Secretary-General also identified in the common agenda.

But often, as governments think about these issues, they don't necessarily think about how those actions, policies or regulations might have an impact on the technical architecture of the Internet.

And often the response might be to address those issues without necessarily thinking that it might impact the global interoperable and global nature of the Internet.

But as we think about the bringing the next billion online, the ability to do so is possible only if the fundamental properties of the Internet that make it open and accessible for anyone to join and connect continues to be retained. The ability for interoperable services and applications to be built on top of it can continue.

So in the Global Digital Compact, we would like to see it reference and highlight the importance of an important interoperable and globally connected Internet.

Thank you very much.

>> Thank you so much, Internet Society. Anyone else? Any stakeholders or Member States? Oh, I see a hand over there.

Would you like to introduce yourself. The lady in the center.

>> Thank you very much, Uping. It's a pleasure to be here to represent the World Benchmarking. I'm appreciative of all the comments from our ministers and share the same concerns as well, especially as an individual who grew up in a developing country, with issues around access and connectivity and basically being included in the digital economy and society.

So just a brief background, the World Benchmarking Alliance works to held companies accountable for their efforts towards the UN sustainable development goals. And we believe very deeply in the spirit of SDG-17, partnership for the goals.

And we believe that this digital global compact will only work in the spirit of SDG17, partnership for the goals. So I echo the words of some of my fellow civil society representatives here.

We work together through the SDG-17. The other thing we would like to stress and see in the Global Digital Compact is an emphasis on inclusion.

We are a key constituent in the roundtable for the digital cooperation roadmap, and at the -- at the end of the day, what we dream about, all of us, as citizens is really that we all share in the benefits of a digital economy, and society. That is the fundamental thing. And without that inclusion, the focus on the inclusiveness to leave no one behind and the digital transformation, to be trustworthy. These are two very important components.

Digital technologies only enable sustainable development if it's inclusive and trustworthy, and all these issues go beyond just connectivity or access. It's all embracing. It covers all issues from access, to skills, to things that affect trust, protecting our children online. Making sure everyone can participate in innovation equally.

Open standards and making sure that disadvantaged groups have a say in the development of technology. And finally one the things we are looking at in our work is the commitment of the private sector towards ethical AI and we might think, oh, why is the topic, you know, being discussed here? It's a forward-looking topic. I will sound an early alarm. As these technologies proliferate across our society and I think the opportunity because the ministers are here, there is a danger that those of us from the least developed world, from the developing countries, will truly be left behind, because we will no longer have the industrialization pathway that was used by newly industrializing countries in east Asia, especially we talk about reshoring, resilience, job displacement.

So we need to open the discussion. It's really --

>> For sure, we will continue the discussion in the next session. I'm sorry. But we need to go to an end for this session, because our next session will come. And probably we will -- we can continue.

It's 9:15.

>> Oh, okay. I do apologize for that. I do apologize to anyone else who wished they could speak? Is it possible for one or two more minutes?

>> MODERATOR: One or two more minutes.

>> Anyone else who would like to speak? I see one more gentleman, the gentlemen., very quickly.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, I'm from Tanzania. One more

comment that I would like to encourage. Imagine a world
where there is no social media. Like, when we came to
Kigali, it's quite difficult if maybe things like social
media are not there to connect back home.

　　　Some of the village you have to travel 20 kilometers
to get access to the Internet.

　　　This shows the demand that we need to make this a
world that it's comfortable for everyone to stay.

　　　Let us make the Internet for everyone possible.
That's the demand access of us and input from all of us.
Thank you.

　　　>> Thank you so much. Over here. I believe it's
Association for Progressive Communication. Two sentences
and then another speaker over there. Very quickly, please.

　　　Two sentences because we are on the indulgence of the
organizers.

　　　Over here.

　　　>> Thank you very much. I'm with the Association of
Progressive Communications.

　　　Just to reflect on some of the things that were said
around the participation of civil society, APC has been
contributing and will continue contributing on bringing the
voices of civil society to this process. The experiences
that we have all the way from WSIS to now, also will
substantiate that.

　　　And just to bring to other priorities to the table,
besides the meaningful connectivity that has been discussed
so far is around integrating intersectional gender approach
to access and the applications of human rights online, as
well as the commitment to environmental protection inserted
through the UN equality agenda.

　　　>> There was a gentleman over here. I'm told we have
one more minute.

　　　I believe there digital cooperation organizations.

　　　>> So I would like to -- this is Sado from the digital
Cooperation Organization. I would like to state about the
data that we published back in February about the Member
States. We issued a joint statement regarding the
policies. It's very important for the global technology
and the companies. So the DCO issued a data statement
process that has a shared vision for Member States and
highlighting the technology companies with the governmental
institutions to respect the data privacy right and interact
responsibly with the data.

　　　>> Thank you.

>> I want to ask one question, how can we interact the public with the private to work on that? Thank you.

>> Thank you. And over here, the very last comment.

>> Hi, this is -- this is Kate Wilson from the Digital Impact Alliance. I would encourage us to think about five Ps that will be needed. Number one is the political will and supporting governments in making digital connectivity and digital commons basically a public right as others have said. I would ask you to think about the policy environment and the supporting the data regulation and 'em powerment that is actually required and actually upon us to think of digital public goods as a product and sets of products that are needed. I will ask you to think about how we support the digital skills and incorporating into that the principles for digital development, which over 300 organizations have called upon.

And I would encourage us to really look much more closely at the business models and the pricing for these products because this is what is preventing a lot of people from getting online. Thank you so much.

>> We really want to hear from all of you more. Please continue to engage us at the office of technology and envoy. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to consult everyone on what you think needs to be in the digital future through the Secretary-General's Global Digital Compact. Thank you very much again.

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