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(Technical difficulties)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: As well as Ms. Athena Vassilopoulos, Generation Connect Europe Youth Envoy from Greece and Luxembourg. I would like to remind all of you that we are today having the hybrid meeting, means that it is our great pleasure to welcome those who took the efforts to be here with us on site, but also we are equally welcoming those who are following us today from all capitals of the Europe as more than 200 participants have been announced to be with us over these two days.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me pause here. It is my great pleasure to open this Forum by Dr. Cosmas Zavazava, director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau. The floor is yours.

>> COSMAS ZAVAZAVA: So good afternoon. And good day to you all. And to all those who are joining us online. It is a great pleasure for me to be here in this beautiful city of Timisoara, the cultural city for 2023 Europe.

For me it is a great reunion with this great country, this great city and the great people of Romania. I would like to say that Europe is leading the way in terms of holding Regional Development Forum. You know every year we have to hold Regional Development Forums with all the stakeholders. Our constituents normally consist of Member States, private sector, regulators, and academia. But when we come to a Forum like this, it is an open door. Everyone is invited to be part of the discussion.

The Regional Development Forum is important for us because then we interact with everyone and benefit from their intellectual inputs. And then we can roll out whatever impact of full activities and projects that we have in stock.

This particular Regional Development Forum is very important in the sense that it is the first Regional Development Forum that we are holding after the adoption of the Kigali action plan, which instructs us to undertake activities that are impactful for the next four years.

As you all know, you the membership adopted five priorities for us to implement over the next four years. One has to do with meaningful connectivity. That we should not leave anyone behind. We have to make sure that everyone's connected. And they participate in a meaningful way, in the information age. The second one has to do with creating an enabling environment to pave the way for the private sector and industry to invest. So the upcoming global symposium for regulators which will run from 5 to 9 June in Sharm el-Sheikh Egypt. We must have the right policies. Two, we must have the right legal framework. And three, the right regulator framework. And an enabling environment to create an enabling equal playing field. And the third one is to do with the digital transformation which is very, very important if we are going to move from where we are to where we want to be.

And the fourth one has to do with resource mobilization and

international cooperation. We know no single UN agency, Government, can do it alone. We need everyone to come and contribute to the Development Agenda.

In a small way, in a big way, in a medium way, it doesn't matter. Together we can go places. So that's what we are looking at so that we can implement viable and bankable impactful projects. And finally, cybersecurity. Which is a critical element for us to keep everyone safe and give them confidence. And Child Online Protection, is a great incentive because the next generation must have the full confidence that they can participate in the generational age and still be safe. We know that during COVID young girls and women were harassed and fell victim and they had no choice to take part in online activity. It also translated itself to being physical.

So we have to make everyone feel comfortable and connect everyone in a meaningful, useful way. This is why, about a month ago I signed an agreement with the European Commission and I thank them here and I thank all the Member States. Worth about 3 million Euros for us to be able to measure meaningful universal connectivity.

If you don't measure it, you don't know it. So we collected statistics based on internationally agreed norms, methodologies and definitions. But we had never measured how meaningful that connectivity is to the people. We want to know.

Many people out of the 2.7 billion people would remain offline within the reach of coverage. But first, maybe they can't afford the service. So affordability is important. Secondly they don't have digital skills. We have to make sure that everyone has got digital skills. But third, Governments, too, they have a role to roll out Government services so the population can participate in a meaningful way. And that way includes electronic commerce, to make sure that everyone participates, even if they live in remote areas. So universal meaningful connectivity is important to bring digital dividends to everyone. Leave no one and leave no place behind.

Even in Europe there is a divide between urban and rural areas, we have to connect. There is a divide between those, between the ages of 15 and 24, that are known in the UN circles as youth. But in ITU we

call them digital natives because they were born with an iPad. They were born with a mobile phone in their hands. And we have to make sure that we bridge that gap with those who are elderly.

They, too, need to be connected. As Artificial Intelligence comes, robotics comes, every new technology, we have to make sure that the older generation also participates and pass on their wisdom to the younger generation. So we have to engage in meaningful, universal connectivity where there is return on investment which is tangible. The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the international community, so we can develop, mitigation, and adaptation, deal with the national disasters, make sure the world can communicate. Without digital, there is a threat that by 2030 the world might not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. And we should have a rescue package which is driven by digital.

We are in Europe and I congratulate because those between 15 and 24, they are active. It is about 98% of them who are active online. We, too, are responsible for the other regions that have got the Least Developed Countries, that are lagging behind. Some regions have got 26 Least Developed Countries. Others have less. But all the same if we are a global village we must have everyone participate. I want to thank Europe, the Government of Estonia, the European Commission for your kind generosity. There are many others that I'm not going to mention. And the danger of mentioning others and not everyone is -- we want to remain accountable to account for the money that you entrust in us to make sure we make the best use of it. And the taxpayers see the reason why you are coming to us. We are both specialized agency and also a project executing agency. So we are happy to serve and to execute projects that impactful.

That will make a difference in people's lives. This particular RDF is special in one thing of you know that in Kigali, at the WTDC-2022 we launched an initiative which we call Partner to Connect which brings everyone who is involved and shares the vision with us that everyone deserves to be connected. Every place has got to be connected. We learned that the partner to connect, to date, we have over 600 pledges, valued at 30 billion dollars. Now those are the

pledges. We want to move a step further. We want to be able to translate pledges in to tangible projects.

So we give tomorrow great importance because we will be matchmaking. We will have the needs of the Member States and we already know them in the European region. We will be having a conversation with those who made pledges so they can pick and choose and say I like this initiative. I'm going to invest in it. I made a pledge for 3 billion dollars. I'm going to put 2 billion in this initiative, 1 billion in this initiative. That way we will be able to make a difference and make the partner to connect a reality. Our target right now is to reach 100 billion dollars. But that 100 billion dollar has got to be translated in to actionable actions and projects. And I would like to thank you once again for having us here. The hospitality that we have received since our arrival is unravelled and ravelled. And then, of course, it is not a long time ago that we were in Bucharest where the Government of Romania was kind enough to host the Plenipotentiary Conference which I thank you. You had confidence and trust, elected me as part of the ITU management team for the next four years. I would like to thank Cristiana and Inga. I call them the glue that binds Europe and the rest of the world. They are active in our work. You are also invited to be part of our conversation. We have great Study Groups that you can participate in. We have an upcoming meeting for global symposium. We also have the telecommunication Advisory Group which is meeting mid June.

Cordially invited. We are not afraid of criticisms. We are not perfect. We can only do the best that we can. We stand guided by you. Your opinion matters. So feel free to join us. And with these words I thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, director, for your remarks. And now Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to invite Cristiana Flutur who is the co-President of the CEPT but also today speaking on behalf of the ANCOM Romania, the host. Let's welcome here.

>> CRISTIANA FLUTUR: Thank you very much. Very kind of you. Thank you BDT director for the very nice words and it's our pleasure to host you here in Timisoara. I know the city is very dear to you.

And thank you to Jaroslaw Ponder and the entire team of the ITU for entrusting us with hosting this event. And, of course, you know that we have hosted this event -- we are hosting it together back to back with CEPT meeting that will start on Wednesday. And I'm very happy to see so many colleagues from Europe again in Romania after the Plenipotentiary Conference. And, of course, from other regions, it is always good to have everyone here in Romania.

So I will go to the speech. I promise I won't take long. So it's a real pleasure and honor to welcome you today on behalf of CEPT but also on behalf of ANCOM, the Romanian regulatory authority for telecom.

I'm even more excited to deliver this speech from my home country and from the beautiful city of Timisoara who you will see has very distinct cultural life and diversity. And the rich architectural heritage. Welcome to Timisoara.

In the last years we witnessed an unprecedented growth in the adoption and usage of the information and communication technologies in Europe and around the world.

The development of ICTs is crucial for Europe's competitiveness in today's increasingly digital global economy. The growth has provided huge opportunities for social and economic development. The dynamic of the ICT sector provides the urge to constantly develop and adapt the new strategies and policy frameworks to keep us up with the new business models and innovation, to make a positive impact in our society, and the economy.

The whole world -- a whole world of possibilities lies ahead of us and comes with tremendous opportunities but also challenges. As well we should not lose sight of the fact that digital technologies have been spreading rapidly. And we have to ensure that citizens in Europe and all over the world have to access wide range of technologies that will improve their lives and will make them -- and will make it more secure and green oriented. Europe is committed to working together

with all regions to create a more sustainable world where everyone everywhere benefits from the technology. That means to continue to adopt strategies, policies, and take immediate actions to make use of the technology and innovation to empower people, especially those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable.

And to ensure inclusiveness and let's not forget equality. Let's focus our efforts in the years to come on harnessing digitalization aimed at bridging the digital divide. I believe this Regional Development Forum and the ones to come in the -- all around the world are perfect platform for dialogue among us.

CEPT will continue working with all regions, raising a united voice for a collaborative dialogue on telecommunications and ICTs to achieve the socioeconomic development. A better future for all is at our fingertips. To create a more integrated digitalized society. I look forward to the fruitful discussions of today and tomorrow of this Regional Development Forum. I wish you not only to enjoy the debate but also on the free time to visit and experience the beautiful city of Timisoara.

The warm climate as I said it is already ordered. And the well-known hospitality of Romanian people. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Madam President of CEPT. And Ladies and Gentlemen, we just heard a lot about the implementation and the implementation cannot happen without the United Nations. I think if we want to generate the impact, impact on the digital, we have to work together with the UN family because everyone is contributing one brick to the whole picture, should it be health, education or the other sectors where the others have the competences and they are working with us to advance digitalization of those sectors. This is the reason why we have the great pleasure to introduce the video message of Ms. Gwi Yeop Son, regional director of the UN development cooperation office for Europe and Central Asia with whom we are working hand in hand in implementing all the regional initiatives as well as expanding our cooperation with the whole network of the country teams. United Nations country teams which

consist of the whole family of the United Nations, with whom we are providing -- to whom we are providing the guidance on the digital development and brainstorming what we as together, one family, should do for the countries.

So let's play the video.

(Video).

>> GWI YEOP SON: Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm delighted to record this message for the Opening Ceremony and would like to express my gratitude to the host ANCOM as well as the ITU. This topic is of significant importance for accelerating the 2030 Agenda. In recent years there has been a growing recognition that digital technology can give an unprecedented boost to sustainable development with the right policies in place. ICT and digital solutions are vital tools for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our Secretary-General has called for more connectivity, less digital fragmentation, as well as more bridges across digital divides and fewer barriers. Digital technologies can become critical enablers and defining characteristics of our time. The ten-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society, the so-called WSIS, organized by ITU, along with the UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD reaffirmed our commitments and realign the WSIS and SDG processes. The UN Secretary-General's our common agenda and roadmap for digital cooperation highlights the importance of adopting a unified UN approach.

And I want to commend ITU for its dedication to fostering this collaboration. In the European region our UN country teams are working hand in hand to advance the sustainable development goals. The digital development country profiles led by ITU in collaboration with the UN country teams serve as an excellent example of how agencies can join forces to identify gaps and formulate a joint response from the UN system. These country profiles offer valuable insights in to the digital development ecosystem. This knowledge can be directly integrated in to UN common country analysis, and provide concrete points of reference for UN country teams to address trends

and gaps collectively.

And in doing so, the country teams will be better equipped to support Member States and deliver on the SDG's digital compact anchored in Human Rights to enable more people to benefit from digital dividends. The UN also needs to be better prepared. The recently launched digital toolbox for Europe and Central Asia under the leadership of ITU represents a significant way forward. This toolbox shows the breadth of UN knowledge and materials to advance digital development.

It can be leveraged by UN country teams and all stakeholders across the European region and beyond. In closing, I would like to extend my best wishes for a productive Forum. May the outcomes of our discussions foster the collaborative spirit that is much needed to address digital transformation effectively.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for this speech. Unfortunately, Ms. Gwi Yeop Son could not be with us due to her obligations in New York today. But also addressing the issues related to the digital. So we're very happy that we could also hear her insights on how we are advancing digital development across the region with the ITU support but more importantly as the one family of the United Nations for development. In talking about the one family, it is my great pleasure to welcome on the stage also the deputy executive secretary of the UN ECE. Dmitry Mariyasin who is with us as the representative of the organization of the strategic importance for our region.

Importance because this organization has been tasked by the World Summit on the Information Society to facilitate the implementation of the WSIS outcomes at the regional level. So let us welcome him and invite to deliver his speech.

(Applause.)

>> DMITRY MARIYASIN: Thank you very much. And thank you for inviting me to speak to you today and to join this very important Regional Forum.

I'd like to start by greeting Dr. Cosmas Zavazava. We've become

friends over the past few months. And also acknowledging the statement by Gwi Yeop Son who I work very closely and also thanking Jaroslav Ponder and your team in all the preparations and support to the run up to today.

As was mentioned I represent the UN Economic Commission for Europe. For those of you who do not know what the UN Economic Commission for Europe does, we are one of the five regional commissions, part of the UN Secretariat. And our role very specifically it to promote regional cooperation in the 56 Member States from Canada to Tajikistan. And also to support regulatory work. So for decades and decades from 1947 we've been connecting countries to develop regulation norm, standards, Conventions in such areas as transport, environment, trade, energy, forestry and so on.

So you must be wondering what's the UNECE deputy correct doing in the ITU Regional Forum addressing you colleagues who are working on digital in the region? There are several very good reasons for that. First, as was already mentioned, digitalization is key for accelerating the implementation of the Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals. The bad news is that even this region, even Western Europe, I emphasize this, and Eastern Europe and then if we go further east in the region, even more so, are on -- off track. I wish I could say on track. But we are off track when it comes to SDGs.

The good news is that the region has also witnessed remarkable revolution in the digital landscape over the past few years as Dr. Cosmas Zavazava mentioned Europe in many ways are leading the way. They are revolutionizing the way.

And the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated that shift. I don't need to tell you how.

The formidable challenges are still there and that's a good reason for us to be convening today. We heard about the digital divide. We need to talk about the environmental effects of digitalization. We, of course, need to talk about privacy, security, Human Rights in the digital sphere and ethical dimensions of emerging technologies. I'm sure this will be covered in the next few days. So let me not dwell on it. UNECE, is prioritizing these topics as part of its role where

digital was highly topical, when we reviewed the region's progress on several SDGs. Just a few months ago.

But there is another second reason why I'm here. Our 56 Member States and all of your countries are UNECE Member States, typically represented by a different ministry in our governing body, Ministry of Economy, sometimes Ministry of Environment. UNECE will have a new cross-cutting theme for the next two years. Digital and green transformation for sustainable development. What it means in practical terms we as a normative body and we have under UNECE over 200 subsidiaries bodies, Working Parties and technical expert groups that develop regulation. That then becomes part of national regulation and is also fed in to European Union directives. Partner very very closely with the European Commission on this.

All this regulatory work needs to be looked at from the point of view of digital. That means future proofing or making rather future ready digital -- tools and regulations that affect such industries as transport, environment, energy and so on.

We have consistently integrated digital in to our work, in our sectorial Conventions and protocols and you might have heard about, for example, such digitalized protocols as ECMR. You might have heard about the electronic data exchange standards that underpin most of global trade. And you might have not heard about the work we're doing on autonomous vehicles or digitalization in the energy sector when it comes to energy as a service and improving energy efficiency.

So UNECE has a task in the new two years to future proof its regulatory work by supporting its Member States in advancing digital as a lens to what we do in sectors.

Representing the digital ministries of this region, we for you can become a partner in this connecting your digital agendas to the work of the other ministries in the Government.

So maybe that's as close as it gets as a metaphor for when we compare what is happening within the UN to what's happening in each country's Government.

And then third reason I'm here, is what several speakers have already referred to, the need for UN agencies to work together and for

the UN to collaborate very importantly with the ITU.

We are proud to co-Chair with ITU, the UN digital transformation group for Europe and Central Asia. We heard about the digital toolbox from Ms. Gwi Yeop Son. We've also reviewed a number of SDGs from the digital perspective in this group. And this is one of the unique mechanisms in this region for UN agencies to collaborate. So I would like to draw your government's attention to it and hope we can serve you even better going forward. Secondly, we are taking our role in supporting the administration of WSIS commitments very seriously.

Third, we work with ITU as a strategic partner in a number of topics, such as Smart Sustainable Cities, connected cars and intelligent transport systems and we can do more. One of the reasons I'm here is to look for ideas what we can do together with ITU going forward and with all of you.

We will need to do this responding to your real needs. We will need to do this collective with UN country teams on the ground where they are present under the leadership of the UN coordinators and we will need to do it together with the European Union as a key partner for the UN in the area of digital and green transformation. So this is why I'm here. It is my great pleasure to greet you on behalf of the UN Economic Commission of Europe and I look forward to the fruitful conversation over the past few days. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for this inspiring speech. And it is my great pleasure now to introduce our last speaker, but very important speak, for our community, representing the voice of the youth, today we are joined by Athena Vassilopoulos who is the Generation Connect Europe Youth Envoy who is working with us since almost one and a half years. And taking a look how to make sure that all youth are empowered, participating in all our activities and also proactively implementing concrete actions. So please let us welcome here and give her the floor. So the floor is yours.

(Applause.)

>> ATHENA VASSILOPOULOS: Thank you, Jaroslaw Ponder, for this

warm introduction. So you probably don't know me. That's okay. We will get to know each other very fast. It is a privilege to be here today representing the Generation Connect Europe group with my colleague that you will see on the next panel. Our mission is to champion youth engagement worldwide across our different regional groups ensuring that youth voices are heard as equal contributors alongside the leaders of today.

This is achieved by empowering youth with the necessary skills and opportunities to further their vision of a connected future where no one is left behind.

Should any doubts persist regarding the significance of involving youth in decision making and policy shaping processes, especially in the realm of digital development allow me to provide you some perspective.

Even though youth have traditionally been overlooked due to their perceived inexperience, the ongoing digital revolution has highlighted our unique value.

As digital natives, users of the digital tools, platforms and technologies we can provide invaluable insights for decision making. And I believe this rebalances the long-standing generation, generational power instrumentry. I would like to highlight my generation is crippled by anxiety and knows the that changing is not an option but a necessity. In this context we need to bring agility to our organizations, adopt forward thinking policies. Beyond the digital literacy and organizational agility diversity of input is vital in crafting policies that are fair, equity and responsive to the needs of everyone in society. Here I would like to highlight also the importance of digital inclusion to meet the needs of half of the population and to not further marginalize already underrepresented groups.

There are two quotes that I often like to bring up, and the first one is that privilege is invisible to the ones who have it. While we have the chance as youth to be connected in Europe, this is not a reality for everyone. And I hope that we should not leave everyone behind. Secondly, the second quote that I really like is that nothing

about youth should be done without us.

So including us is a process. And if you haven't started yet, I invite you to do so. 157 years after its creation, ITU was hosting the first ever Generation Connect global youth Summit in Kigali and I believe that Generation Connect is a first milestone towards for youth engagement and I think it is only the beginning.

So we need to build upon it, reinforce youth engagement by working together and encourage more bottom up approaches. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for this great speech.

And for bringing to our -- reiterating importance of support and engagement of the youth.

So I hope that whenever you will be hearing from us regarding supporting our youth operations at the country level and engaging them in the regional activities, we can count on you. Thank you in advance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with this we are -- we arriving to the end of the Opening Ceremony. I would like to thank all speakers for their contributions. But before we are closing, we have a small ceremony to conduct. It is already our long-standing tradition that we are appointing the senior representative of the country as the Chair of the Regional Development Forum to make sure that we are properly guided by the -- not only the host but representative of the region. And this is my great pleasure to introduce His Excellency, Bogdan Dumea, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Research, innovation and digitalization of Romania. Thank you for this welcome to Mr. Bogdan Dumea. But now I need to ask you if you agree to appoint him as the Chair. So I invite you to make the step. Thank you very much. And congratulations. We invite you to step on the stage. And to join us. I would equally like to invite you, maybe to inform you that I will have the pleasure to assist the Chair in conducting this meeting as his secretary.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with this, I would like to thank you very

much for your attention. I would like to invite our newly appointed Chair to join us and to provide an introductory speech. Thank you very much. And one more time congratulations.

(Applause.)

>> BOGDAN DUMEA: It is more taller than me. Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, friends, since it is my first time attending the ITU Regional Development Forum, allow me to introduce myself. I am Bogdan Dumea, Secretary of State within the Ministry of Research, innovation, and digitalization. On behalf of the Romanian Government I'm delighted to have the opportunity to address today touch a distinguished audience. I thank you for giving me this opportunity. We are experiencing a period of rapid technological change with great impact on every area of our lives.

The industrial revolution and the constant development of technology dramatically impacted the way that individuals relate to the society, producing major changes in both, both in the collective consciousness and in the development of interpersonal relations.

Most importantly, the industrial evolution continues to have a major impact on the economic development of countries. Over time the IT and C industry has become a safe and effective tool that generates economic growth, not only through the development of millions of jobs, but also through the promotion of innovation and progress at the global level.

Romania's IT&C sector has seen continuous growth over the past decade and having high performances in terms of connectivity, cybersecurity, and digital development with a large number of specialized software companies of the IT&C market is one of the most dynamic sectors of the Romanian economy. Our country is the leader in Europe. And sixth in the world in terms of the number of certified IT specialists.

Romanians have a digital oriented mindset and the country has an innovative footprint with an impressive number of talented, creative visionary and innovative IT&C professionals. In fact, Timisoara, the city we are in here today, is among the top cities in terms of number of employees in the IT&C industry.

As well Romania continues to make efforts to accelerate the digitalization of public services, increase investments in research and development, and promote the technologies of the future.

We know that digitalization plays an important role in the social and economic growth of each country. And Romania makes no exception. Digitalization has shown a rapid growth trend in the latest years being a real engine for our economy and a boost for the society as a whole for the long term. The Romanian Government is actively involved in taking essential steps to come forward with policies that will boost the digital education, accelerate progress on digital learning, and digital skills. To promote policies that lead to reducing barriers to advance digital education for women and discourage any form of discrimination.

In terms of -- in terms of gender balance and inclusiveness, according to the European statistics Romania is among the leading countries in terms of percentage of women amongst specialist in the IT&C industry. With over 25% of IT&C specialists in Romania, being women, a figure that has doubled during the last ten years.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe that there is a great potential of digital technologies to develop better outcomes for better lives and we must harness this to achieve a positive change for all.

Building a future society through economic growth, job creation and reduction of inequalities by using digital technologies is fundamental for shaping and ensuring a sustainable society.

I thank you very much for your attention. And wish you all very productive discussions as well as I hope to see you all later tonight for a special event. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Ladies and Gentlemen, and this brings us to the end of the Opening Ceremony. Thank you very much. I would like to invite all of our speakers of the Opening Ceremony to take your seats in the first row. And I would like to invite director of the BDT and the Chair of the RDF while high level speakers of the next session to join us on the stage.

So please take the seat. We have several of them. While our

colleagues are taking their seats, yeah, while our colleagues are taking their seats, dear Ladies and Gentlemen, we are starting the session which is very important to us. And the reason why we wanted to kick off our Regional Development Forum with the discussion on the digital development and the perspectives coming from the different stakeholders is one that we will need to work together in hand in hand taking in to account all aspects and all contexts related to the digital transformation connectivity and inclusiveness.

As director mentioned, we need to make sure that all these political ambitions are translated in to the tangible actions for impact. And in order to make this happen, let us better understand during this session also on those political ambitions, Europe is consisting of 46 countries with the home for the over 750 million inhabitants. There is -- it is not -- there is no doubt on this that Europe is leading on several items in the digital ecosystem. In the international comparisons very often we see Europe on the top of the comparisons with big passion we are also taking a look at the development and innovations entered and launched by the European Commission. And the other organizations.

Recently, we are working all together on the way forward for the digital market act, digital service act, cybersecurity act, Artificial Intelligence Act. This is a source of a lot of inspirations for many of us but also a lot of inspirations for many of those who are looking for the good practices, which are leading to harmonized way of dealing with the strategic issues. And Europe is a good reference point for those countries out of our -- outside of our region but also those who are not part of the European Union or following their own approaches. Nevertheless, as already stated, we are also facing a lot of divides. And they require the joint action should it be connectivity or the digital transformation, or inclusion skills. All of us know how many millions of the unskilled and digitally unprepared staff we have inhabitants we have across the region which requires our attention. Cybersecurity becomes the major importance with over half a million of the cyber attacks reported on the annual basis.

It motivates all of us to be committed and building confidence in

use of the ICTs. And finally, innovation, which inspires a lot of policymakers trying to make sure that digital is used for the good. And with the highest possible impact.

All these creates a lot of inspirations for many of our actions, but actions which also are accelerated via the emerging trends, which are coming. Which need to have -- which need to be addressed by the policymakers, regulators, private sectors, academia and the others. Artificial Intelligence, Metaverse as well as the global challenges, climate change and mitigation. It is something where we need to think through how to join the forces and act together for impact. Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for joining us for this special session. I think now is the time to hand over the floor to those who join us physically but also those who unfortunately, could not be with us on site. They are with us online. And I would like to invite first to provide his statement, the Minister of the North Macedonia. I hope that Excellency, you are connected with us. And I'm handing over to you while reminding on the time regime as we are running late. So just remind each speaker has three minutes or four minutes maximum. And there will be some signs. So please don't be angry with the Secretariat once you hear some sounds. And what will be the sound we will hopefully not learn? So over to you.

>> AZIR ALIU: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to address you, I regret it must be done online. I want to express my gratitude for the cooperation. The Minister of Information Society and administration plays a crucial role. We have previously received support from the ITU team in drafting our national ICT strategy and I hope that this event will serve as a starting point for discussing new activities for further, Ministry of Information Society and administration, at ITU. We are currently in the process of establishing a policy for digital transformation that will serve as a main institution responsible for implementing and coordinating digital transformation in our country. The agency will be built up of four key pillars. The first one digitalization and digital processes, IT education and awareness, cybersecurity and infrastructure.

It is a significant challenges for us and I am hopeful that we'll

complete this handover by the end of the year. Simultaneously, we strive to align the EU regulations and implementing the best practices in our country.

I'm optimistic that our country will soon join the digital Europe program which will provide numerous opportunities for us as a collaborate and create stronger digital ecosystem for our citizens.

Thank you very much for your time. Once again I would like to express my gratitude for this opportunity. And I'm sending a warm regards from Scopia.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you. Now it is my great pleasure to hand over to the Ministry of Infrastructure, from Albania. Excellency, Enkelejda Mucaj over to you.

>> ENKELEJDA MUCAJ: Thank you. Thank you for the introduction. Greetings from Albania. Your Excellencies, Ministers, dear Minister Cosmas Zavazava, dear Madam President, we are more than delighted to thank you ITU for organizing this important event and especially the government of Romania and specifically ANCOM for hosting the annual Regional Development Forum for Europe in Timisoara and for CEPT for organizing this Forum, too.

We are very much aware that the ITU's Europe development Forum represents a very important event which gives to all of us the opportunity to exchange our views, to exchange best practices and experiences as well as challenges we are facing on the digital development in Europe and especially on those strategic objectives and implementation of the development priority to support the countries.

We are also -- are in the focus of let's say all the development priorities of Romania in the field. And as matter of fact, the digital transformation development of digital infrastructure and digitalization of public services are and represent the highest priorities of the Government of Albania while we have provided an offering at the request of the ITU, also our contributions in the five priorities set by the conference itself.

As many or not of you know, Albania is not only committed to and is going ahead, more than that with a digital integration and transformation, as a matter of fact we are providing today more than

95% of our public services online only.

And we are let's say playing a role and appear to be even the leading country in the Western Balkans in terms of digitalization of public services showcasing. That's the story in the region. On the other side, on the digital infrastructure development we have, let's say we look forward to even much more improved development in the fixed broadband penetration which is increasing fast. While in last year's the mobile broadband place based on 4G plus provided good coverage on almost 99% of our territory. We are more than committed to advance on the digital transformation having the digitalization as one of the main National Strategy on development and integration for year 2030. We are implementing our digital infrastructure development as per a plan in cooperation with the ITU.

We are having a process in new loan electronic communication, on the 5G we are planning to launch licenses during the year 2023 to 2024. We already adopted a new digital agenda on which is mainly focusing on digital -- reducing the digital divide.

We are also adopting internal legislation or support of the startups. And we also have adopted new strategic document for science, technology and innovation for the years let's say 2030 and we have a national smart specialization strategy 2030 already in process.

We have side Association agreements with Europe programming. And we also hope to have the -- be part of the EU Digital Programme very soon. My dear friends and colleagues, we avail ourselves on this opportunity to thank ITU for all the support already provided to Albania. And we look forward to and reiterate our interest in continuing the future collaboration with ITU and all the European countries in the digital transformation process of UN. We are very strongly committed and express our will to be part of the innovation and entrepreneurship. Thank you all for the opportunity and for having this opening panel. And wishing and conveying to all of you best wishes, strength honor and finally further development. Thank you so much for your attention.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for being with us and for all messages coming from Tirana. Normally I would now turn to

Latvia where the -- His Excellency, Maris Sprindzuks spin, Minister of environmental protection and regional development was with us for almost 45 minutes. But unfortunately he was called to some emergency. But we are very lucky because we are joined today by the principal advisor Minister. So I will hand over to him the floor for conveying the message of the Minister. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> Thank you, Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder, for the opportunity to be here today and address you all on behalf of the Republic of Latvia. Good afternoon. My name is Marcs and I'm advisor to the Minister and I stand before you today in this esteemed Telecommunication Union conference to shed light on the prospects that lie ahead in the future. The speech will not be online as the Minister started a Government meeting a few minutes ago. I'm honored to present this speech from Maris Sprindzuks the Minister of environment, protection and regional development of the Republic of Latvia. There is a question, what will come when there will be 5G Artificial Intelligence, cloud services and edge computing. The answer is it will all be merged in the space called Metaverse. The Metaverse will emerge as an evolution and convergence of today's technologies.

While many people still associate the term Metaverse with a colorful virtual world for entertainment and shopping, the industrial Metaverse has a potential to revolutionize the real world in ways that few technologies can't.

We are very honored to be here. And be a part of ITU Metaverse ecosystem development by contributing with our recourses, expertise. We will use the advantages to bring our best to the overall project of ITU Metaverse, standardization process.

Metacity rigor is other new track. An ecosystem where innovation will be backed with policy, and regulations, a unique test bed for solutions to be tried deplored, and transferred further to a partnership countries. Interoperability and strong ecosystems are crucial for building the industrial Metaverse as they are successful utilization today. Latvia is delighted to introduce the new metacity e-concept. An open ecosystem with extensive database to be used by

Government enterprises and users to cocreate interact and merge the layers of innovation, and development with the policy, and real life use cases. By merging digital twins, with their real world counterparts organizations will optimize processes in a continuous feedback loop. This convergence of digital and real words will change the way we work and collaborate, enabling realtime interaction with other people and machines just like in the real world.

Metacity rigor project foresee several milestones to be achieved by the year 2026. It will include three main Articles. Health care, urban environment and education and training.

The main stakeholders here are Government, enterprises, communications and network providers. All together, Latvian citizens. This year to launch the metacity rigor ecosystem, we are truly grateful for the help coming from ITU standardization Working Group. For the in next year it is planning to meet with several educational health care and urban applications.

To accelerate the new solutions emergence in all mentioned industries a clear definition of policy and regulatory framework will need to be developed. And here we see a long lasting collaboration with ITU and all our partnership countries. Really look forward for the next few intense days together with all of you to those present here at Regional Development Forum in Timisoara to create a roadmap because only with interoperable ecosystem we can build a real value adding life improving Metaverse which will change the way we live. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for this message. And we are conveying the -- our greetings to the Minister and thanks for being with us for intervention.

Ladies and Gentlemen, and now it is my great pleasure to turn to the message from Valeriya Ionan, Deputy Minister of the Minister of digital transformation from the Ukraine. And I would like to request for connection.

>> VALERIYA IONAN: Good evening. Standing Ukraine and supporting Ukraine. Three years ago when the Minister of Digital

Finance and Information of Ukraine was created to implement the state an excellent part of the President's election program at that time we started with a vision to build the most convenient digital state in the world. DIA is a brand of Ukraine's digital state combining strong spirit, political will and vision. DIA is an ecosystem that combines five different projects. The game-changer of public services with more than 90 million Ukrainian users. DIA portal is a Governmental web portal with more than 120 governmental online services. DIA business is the first and most significant national project that consolidates all available free opportunities and tools for entrepreneurship. It covers the entire cycle. This project has both an online one-stop shop portal and a network of offline DIA business hubs. This is a significant stamp in to the upscaling focusing on lifelong learning and new computer science and new educational series in an edutainment format. Two weeks before the full scale invasion we also launched the DIA city. For now more than 500 Ukrainian and international companies have become residents of DIA city. An important core part of the digital services ecosystem is the platform of registry. This is open source solution for Government registries and digital public services. It allows you to build government IT systems with scaleable databases and digital services using a low core approach. It was the first in the world recognized as stack compliant. The people of Ukraine and Government continue to fight for our freedom in the bright future of Ukraine, Europe and the world. And we will continue to fight until our victory.

There were also a lot of new challenges on the digital front on the beginning of a full scale Russian invasion. We have created new services in the DIA app, social and financial assistance, the possibility to report damaged properties, report about Russian troops and equipment, aiming to give access for 24/7 use to Ukraine. Even during the war at the state must function and citizens must receive services first. We continue building the most convenient digital state in the world.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. Warmest greetings to Washington where Excellency is currently having a lot of meetings

and strategic discussions.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, and with this we have opened the topic of digitalization. Once we are talking about the digitalization it is always -- we are going Estonia and this time also we will go to Estonia. Our colleagues from our digital Ambassador, today we are joined by Nele Leosk, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The floor is yours.

>> NELE LEOSK: Thank you. Thank you ITU. And hello to all our friends. Some of whom I already met in the panel before and also now. But I'm sure if I had an opportunity to see you all in the audience I would see more friends than I do currently in my lonely screen.

So Estonia has been brought not only by Jaroslaw and others as one of the those countries that has won from technologies. I think it is extremely important to remember this in the times when we talk about the risks that technologies can bring together. And it is indeed so that it was not just digitalization. But reforming the country with the help of the digital technologies that has made Estonia much bigger than it currently is.

And in a way I can say that Estonia continues to make steps to still be one of the if not the most advanced digital country in the world. And I can tell you that it is becoming increasingly difficult. It is very difficult to maintain the levels of our people are used to. It is very difficult to maintain high speed, cheap Internet and so forth. And probably because technologies are moving much faster than we could all expect. Last week we had tech Ambassador's meeting in Silicon Valley where we discussed what's happening in the world. And the year before we were there, too, not even imagining what open AI could do within the year.

So this, of course, has increased even more international collaboration. Not only for the technological partnerships, for making sure we can still use AI and other developments but also to make sure that we feel good in this digital space and has also therefore protected diplomacy. I would say higher in everyone's agenda than it has before.

But the good news is that within these past 25 years let's say in Estonia and around the world, with Government utilization, we have come to realize that we are not that different. We are different. But still our problems are the same. And the solutions to these problems could also be the same.

So in Estonia therefore we will continue an open source and open code policy, really supporting co-creation and reuse.

So in 2016 Estonia together with Finland established an institute for interoperability solutions to develop and maintain our data interoperability layer which is actually very critical to Estonia's digitalization together with Finland. These automatically means that we spend less but we can also rely on resources that Finland can supply. And we can all agree that lack of human resources and capabilities that has been mentioned so many times here today also is becoming actually increasingly difficult, especially for smaller countries. And through this reuse we have also supporting them -- reuse of the digital components, we have also initiated together with ITU that we are very grateful for, and Germany and Digital Impact Alliance an initiative called GovStack. It was mentioned by our Ukrainian colleague, that pulls together the knowledge and experience from all over the world. Developing open, reusable components for digitalization. This can be registries, identity, content management, payment systems and so many others that can be then localized and in a way reused.

Of course, it all needs to be adapted to local situations and processes.

Not only by giving we are very open also to look what is happening around the world and I'm also glad to say that Estonian Government is using part of the code of the Ukrainian application in our new mobile application meant for sit -- providing citizen services.

So I am calling all us in Europe to collaborate and contribute to our common digitalization. And common good. So again thank you Jaroslaw and ITU for this opportunity. I hope to meet you all very soon in time.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. Thank you very much

for this message coming directly from Talin and now let's come back to the south of Europe, we are having great pleasure to be joined today in person by the Excellency Tadej Rupel. Ambassador national coordinator for external aspects of digitalization, AI and cybersecurity, Ministry of Foreign and European affairs, Republic of Slovenia.

>> TADEJ RUPEL: Thank you. It is my great pleasure to be here today. I'm sure that Slovenia is well-known and mapped on the digital map of Europe. I don't want to use this time because we have other opportunities to present how advance Slovenia is in digital sphere. I would like to focus on the topic of this panel, which is digital development in Europe. Trends, opportunities and challenges and say a few words about challenges. But first, of course, trends. Trends are very positive in digital sphere. It is very much connected with countries which has higher GDP. And we showed -- I mean the current pandemic showed that in the last four years, I think more than 100 million out of 700 million, 750 million become -- became digital users in Europe just in four years. So it means that digital interaction is gaining also in industry, in banking industry, especially groceries as well as health care. Some areas were lacking behind. So I think it is important that demographic component of the digital transformation is highly on our agenda, be it deprived, elderly, gender. And I think the digital skills are important to take care.

Now moving toward the challenges. The higher the environment is developed bigger and more complex challenges are. Let me focus on four challenges which I identify this as most critical ones.

So one is the increased cybersecurity. Increased security risk. State and nonstate actors are bridging the laws. Development and regulation and so on. And I think that cyber capacity building is crucial on that front. Second challenge which I found very critical which is convergence. Convergence between inside the Europe, not European Union but inside the Europe. As European union we have partnerships, areas that are very much connected in digital world. So I think it is very important to pay high attention on the digital

evolution as a whole.

Furthermore, I think there is also high importance to pay to secure digital and green transition. We all know that digital can help us to become as human race or humankind more green but on the other hand, we need to have a technologies which are green to be operated as well.

On fourth and most important which is mentioned already today is the digital skill gap. So I think that we are aware that gender, elderly vulnerable are not always, not so well income population, part of population is not so advanced in doing -- going digital. On the other hand, we have a lot of public sectors, a lot of companies which don't want to move from the comfort zone. Comfort zone we use old platforms and patterns of work. They don't want to use digital. One we are lacking the human resources of IT, human resources on IT gaps and we need to drive safely as well. That's true.

And I think that we have to make sure that civil approaches which are usually used in decision-making processes are sometimes not always seen with a digital transformation we are doing. So I think it is important for us although we have all the digital technologies, we need to use it somehow. Be it from digital skills or to have digital -- developing digital competencies on one hand and as well on human resources which we serve as -- to close the IT gap which we have.

So I would like to conclude and congratulate Romania for hosting us here and ITU for organizing this regional developmental Forum which is important platform. And I think that that we need to have some short logo, like digital is great. Let's develop it safe. So thank you so much.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Excellency. And now it is my great pleasure to invite Olga Tumuruc, head of the Moldova e-governance agency. So the floor is yours.

>> OLGA TUMURUC: Excellencies, dear colleagues, first of all thank you for having us here. And thank you for this opportunities to bring some insights from Moldova and to excuse them in a broader

European context. I have to mention that our Government, government of Republic of Moldova has made a bold decision to accelerate digital transformation of the nation by making use of existing opportunities and exploring the whole of society approach. Thus, ensuring that transformation is inclusive and sustainable.

We are all acknowledging that we are living in a period of vivid technological changes and digitalization. Thus, the state has to be able to capitalize on the opportunities that are offered by the technologies but in the same time has to be able to manage the risks that are brought by this process.

The digital development as we are envisaging it aims not only to bring leading technologies in to the Government, but also to rethink, to simplify processes to improve public services and make them work for the benefit of the citizens. All this is performed in order to build a good and efficient governance that is responsible to the citizen needs. We promote and implement digital development as a way to ensure more qualitative user centric accessible public services available first. And by default online.

To ensure an efficient public administration that hears its citizens and works for the interest, to ensure that we are transparent and we are cocreating for the public interest. But also to ensure that new business or activity models are generated. And we are following the technological vibe. To support the digital transformation process and the digitalization of public services, we are now leveraging the developed e-governance ecosystem, set of services and platforms and services and that mainly all information system have.

This building blocks together with addition all visual components designed for a quick and standardized digitalization of public services are now integrated and provided in a centralized manner through front office digitalization platform.

So such services as trusted identification based on digital signature identification and access control integrated signing service, digital payments, data exchange, logging, notification, all these are available through APIs and integration.

And all are run from our Governmental cloud infrastructure. Just to be mentioned also that these e-governance ecosystem is backed up with a coherent regulatory framework that on one hand describes and explains how all these building blocks are developed, how do they work but in the same time, it regulates the mandatory, the use within public sector. Putting in place such a model helped us to have an integrated approach within public sector IT develop to break silos, to make authorities cooperate for the benefit of the citizens. To these helped us to transform challenges in opportunities.

Having this set, I do encourage countries to explore the trends of new technologies. I do encourage countries to learn from each other's experience. But at the same time when designing and building our own digital development journey, we need to consider our national context and to do -- to choose those solutions and models that are most appropriate to address the challenges that we face.

Thank you.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for that. And now Ladies and Gentlemen, let's move to Serbia, we are with us, Excellency Goran Djurdjevic, assistant Minister from the ministry from Republic of Serbia. The floor is yours.

>> GORAN DJURDJEVIC: Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to thank ITU for organizing this Regional Development Forum, particularly Mr. Cosmas Zavazava and Jaroslaw who invited me to say some words on behalf of the Ministry of Information and telecommunication. Collaboration with ITU is essential for Serbia. It is important to implementing the ITU regional initiative for trust and security in the use of ICT. We find the main products, a lot of Guidelines, Guidelines for parents and educators, Guidelines for industry. Guidelines for policymakers. There is a training, there is a lot of training in the module.

Recent event happening in the Republic of Serbia has reinforced need for more protection of children, which includes Child Online Protection. I will mention only specific steps taken by the Government of The Republic of Serbia. The Government formed a Working Group for the safety of children on the Internet, Working Group to

support the mental health and safety of young people and Working Group for information society. Also the Government established Council for the prevention of peer violence.

Also established direct connection to representative of social media company such as Facebook, TikTok. It is our duty that ensure that children are safe when they go online. We need to educate ourselves on cybersecurity risks and take measures to protect our children from them. Some of the ways that we can do this includes, educating children, supervision, young children should be supervised when using the Internet. Using secure, security software. It is important to use security software such as antivirus and firewall software to protect against cyber attacks. There is a DNA project is the same.

Also as parental control software can also be used to monitor children's Internet use and block inappropriate content. Communication is key when it comes to online safety. Parents should create an open and honest environment with their children about online activities and encourage them to take about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. We also need to empower our children to take an active role in their own online safety.

We can teach them how to recognize and avoid potential threats, how to report any concerns to a trusted adult.

Ultimately cybersecurity is about creating a safe and security online environment where our children can learn and grow without the fear. By working together and taking row proactive steps we can make this vision a reality. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Excellency, for this message. And we are looking forward to the collaboration with you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, and now let us turn to our representatives of the communities of the National Regulatory Authorities. As you will see in a second, Kostas Masselos President of the Hellenic telecommunications and post commission of greet. He is connected with us. But he will be also speaking on behalf the BEREC as Professor Kostas Masselos is also Chairing in 2023 this body of the regulators.

So over to you, Professor. And looking forward to your contribution.

>> KOSTAS MASSELOS: Thank you, Jaroslaw. Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, good afternoon. I'm very pleased to participate in ITU's Regional Development Forum for Europe. And being offered the opportunity to discuss about the digital development in Europe. As Jaroslaw mentioned, given my position as BEREC Chair in 2023, I would like to focus on BEREC vision and objectives.

So BEREC's core tasks have interred on communications, contributing to the internal market and implementation of the regulatory framework for electronic communications within Europe. BEREC has continuously adjusted itself to advance regulation as markets evolve and individuals and businesses' needs change, by promoting Net Neutrality. Very recently BEREC published its vision and action plan for 2030. It shows how BEREC can contribute to regulatory environment in Europe in 2030 that will be fit for the digital age and the global context. We aims at actively facilitating and fostering sustainable digital ecosystems that will be the key to empowering people and businesses in future societies.

To this end, BEREC has identified five strategic orientations that will determine it future role in the run up to 2030. First, fostering national, international connectivity to reach the objectives of Europe's digital decade by 2030. Second, facilitating an open and sustainable Internet ecosystem and supervising the evolution of digital landscape. Providing for the security and the resilience of the network services. Fourth contributing to the achievement of environmental sustainability goals and fifth strengthening its own agility independence, inclusiveness and efficiency as a center of expertise. In particular as regards the second strategic priority, and supervising the evolution of the digital landscape, BEREC identified that the technological developments are changing the landscape from electronic communication networks and services to Internet communications. New digital services and platforms are replacing traditional electronic communication services some that are located in neighboring markets. Role of the telecom regulators which

are now positioning themselves as a regulators of the broader Internet.

Digital transition of services also comes with a risk of vulnerable groups being excluded in participating in society as recorded in the European Declaration on digital rights and principles for the digital decade, adopted by the Council. Therefore, BEREC with strive to contribute to the European Union to ensure that everyone can benefit from the open Internet and the digital world. In this very challenging context, BEREC wishes to continue exploring ways of closer collaboration and dialogue with international institutions. The increasing convergence of the issues faced in the field of digital technologies between the European Union and the rest of the world shows the global nature of these technologies and means that policies, legislation and regulation must be seen from a more global perspective.

ITU is perfectly placed to act as the global platform. Making meaningful connections in order it address the relevance in the field of digital technologies. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. One more time, thank you very much for the great collaboration with BEREC. We have very much a structured organization with this organization. Let me turn to the other platform, we will learn more about EMERG in Naama Henig, head of international affairs at the ministry of the communications from Israel who is the Chair of '23, Chair of the EMERG. Over to you.

(Applause.)

>> NAAMA HENIG: Thank you Jaroslaw for the invitation and for organizing such an impressive event.

(Speaking in a non-English language) Mr. Cosmas Zavazava I have some advantage because my parents immigrated from Romania to Israel many years ago, 74 years ago, '48. So they spoke Romanian between themselves. Not very far from this city that undersecretary -- sorry, secretary of Bogdan Dumea comes from. It is not too far. It is the part of Romania that's closer to Moldova.

As I said it is my great pleasure to participate in this event and speak in this I would say important event on behalf of EMERG which Israel one of its founders. And it's the Chair as was mentioned by Jaroslaw. And it is -- on behalf of the state of Israel. It is my pleasure to see my friends, my esteemed colleagues from EMERG. And also many friends, the Chair of CEPT, Ms. Cristiana Flutur and others from CEPT and the Ukraine group. EMERG, the European Mediterranean regulation group is an independent platform of National Regulatory Authorities for electronic communications networks and services.

Sorry. EMERG members include 24 countries, 12EU countries, and 12 non-EU countries from the MEA area, Western Balkan Western Europe and Switzerland. Let me extend an invitation to the UK, Serbia, North Macedonia and also Slovenia to rejoin EMERG.

This regional platform serves as a very powerful tool to ensure rapid sector development which takes electronic communication regulatory frame work as its base mark line and also priorities approximation to the EU. Moreover, the network's interest relies on the establishment of a close cooperation between regulators within the group and between other regional groups.

To date EMERG have a close and fruitful collaboration in all joint workshops and seminars on a regular basis with other regional groups where we share experience, best practices, and national initiatives in areas such as connectivity, 5G, international roaming, Consumer Protection, digital market and more.

I'm happy to share that during the GSR conference EMERG signed a MoU with the ITU for areas of cooperation with the aim of implementing program and joint initiatives and events.

I can also share EMERG is planning together with the ITU to sign another MoU for multi regional cooperation on concrete themes which will also include other regional groups such as, the BDT and Jaroslaw for this initiative. It is very important and we look forward to working together.

From Israel's side, we are very happy to be a part of the Europe region and contribute our knowledge, experience and best practices in the fields of innovation, advanced technologies, connectivity,

security, Internet related issues and digital skills. And participate regularly in the Europe regional events in the ITU's route, all sectors and EU events and CEPT. In addition Israel follows the European regulation and in some cases is adopting various elements from its regulations. For example, we have just concluded the very successful training project on strengthening the regulatory capacity of Israel in the field of telecommunications together with Italy, Germany and Latvia with a focus of service provision network and then operated by others.

With the assistance of our European colleagues we established a universal fund which is from -- a fragmental component in the successful and rapid deployment of fiber networks, especially in rural and periphery areas. Yeah. In a minute I will escape something. Just one more minute. Okay. I will escape this.

As stated before, Israel is an essential part of the Europe region and will continue to actively participate contribute and share its best practices and hopefully be able to host this conference in Israel in the future. I would like to take this opportunity and mention that Israel has submitted a formal request to CEPT to join CEPT and we would very much appreciate your support to our request. Dear colleague, last but not least, you are all invited to a social reception at the end of the day tomorrow, hosted by the state of Israel. Thank you very much.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for the cooperation. But also for inviting to us the intergenerational dialogue which is very important for the digital development. Thank you very much for thinking about this aspect, to strengthen this workflow.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we've heard reference to the EaPeReg. The floor is yours.

>> EKATERINE IMEDADZE: Thank you very much, Jaroslaw. Dear, Ladies and Gentlemen, speakers, participants, Distinguished Guests, it is my special honor to be part of the ITU regional development Forum for Europe, held in wonderful, beautiful Timisoara, Romania. It's -- I regret not being able to participate physically and special thanks to ITU for organizing and to Romanian party for hosting. And

it's my enhanced responsibility as mentioned to represent Eastern partnership network consisting of five countries, five partner countries, regulatory authorities, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and to stop on some initiatives of Georgia COMCOM. Regional development initiative and under the special efforts carried out under the United Nations 2030 Development Agenda. To start with, digital infrastructure development one of the major pillars of the EaPeReg networks and broadband development Working Group, IRB is supporting the countries and ensuring that legal frameworks in EaPeReg countries support.

We supported others by experienced solutions on building the broadband infrastructure, service map by using open source software, spatial data and we are eager for any enhanced research and analytical activities we may take part together with ITU initiatives.

One more pillar we work towards digital transformation for resilience, this initiative focuses on development of technical -- developing of technical and service infrastructure as well as capacity building. So one of the key topics of EaPeReg regional and EaPeReg region's digital strategy under the youth for digital initiative, digital corridor and building digital service hubs. It is also worth mentioning that now in Georgia we're working on developing the strategy where -- how to build on our capability and capacities to become the south caucas region's digital hub. So we welcome any opportunity of extended experience sharing. This program concerns creating an alternative secure transit route for the whole region as well as learning from the experience of the EU regional countries who have applied similar initiatives.

Now let me focus for a couple of minutes on the COMCOM specific activities. To speak about the digital inclusion and skills Development Program we have under the COMCOM media literacy development department. We are now developing the digital adoption program. To address barriers to participation of individuals in to the Digital Economy. In addition it promotes digital inclusion in most vulnerable groups and supports the use of Internet and digital services by women, social, minorities, Persons with Disabilities and

elderly people. And successful program outcomes and objectives. One more topic, it is trust and confidence in the use of telecommunications infrastructure and communication technologies.

One major pillar of our work is building experience on implementation strategies for emergency communication and standards and best practices for secure activity communication at the regional level as well as on national level. And as a regulatory authority we -- with the mandate in both telecommunications and media sectors we are safeguarding also child protection and online safety standards and programs that are mandated by law. And would appreciate any opportunity to collaborate on topics as well.

We at EaPeReg and COMCOM look forward to working more with ITU on the different topics and we're grateful for very successful projects already conducted and we concretize the seriousness of initiatives we believe to the practical projects. Thank you very much.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for this message. And we are looking forward to the cooperation with EaPeReg and also with you as the Commissioner of the COMCOM and Georgia. And this brings us to the end of the contributions from the high level representatives of the administrations, regulators and other bodies, agencies which are contributing to the advancing the digitalization and digital transformation across the region. We have with us also the voice of the youth. So your take-aways from those messages we're very much eager to hear what the youth is taking from that. And what would like to add upon that.

And this will be followed by a special message of our special guest of today, but I will tell about this later. So it is my great pleasure to invite Andrei Dodea who the Generation Connect envoy.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Greetings. Thank you so very much for being here. And in the interest of time I'll get straight to the matter. There's still billions of people who are yet to have been connected. Some even citizens in our countries. Out of the billions of people who have been connected, only one in five people actually has a desk job. When we think about the digital capacity gap, we usually think about the paradigm of white collar and blue collar. But with the

quick advancements of technologies such as low code or RPA, or especially generatives AIs, we're starting to see a widening gap even between desk jobs. And in this context, I believe that we should focus first and foremost on teaching the digital skills that are required and will continue to be relevant long in to the future.

Now in this context, we have a few challenges. First is connectivity. Second is access to digital learning opportunities. Third is speed. You see technology is changing at such a rapid speed. By the time we will be recreating our systems, by the time that we will recreate our curriculums from the ground up or recreate the University programs, we're doing, by that time technology will have already disrupted all of that. Will have already advanced. Yet in a case I seem hopeful because we here have an advantage. We here in this part of the world have one distinct dare I say unfair advantage. That advantage is our differences. Our difference cultures, languages and our different perspectives.

You see, innovation is the meeting point between different ideas. And we together in this part of the world have an unfair opportunity to innovate. If we continue our partnership in a sustainable manner such as by this very Forum.

But innovation is usually brought about by the young people. Which is why I believe there will be at the forefront of rescaling. Young people are hopeful, they're enthusiastic and they really, really want to have an impact.

No wonder why the European Commission called 2022 the year of youth. And I find it really, really interesting that after the year of youth, after the year of youth, in 2023 the European Commission called this year the year of skills.

I believe we have an opportunity, a great opportunity to work on scaling, rescaling and upscaling the relevant digital skills that will continue to matter long in to the future. Our future can and will be bright if we work together on the skills that will continue to matter long in to our future. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. Thank you very much. And thank you very much to all of our distinguished speakers. And Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the time when we have the great pleasure to invite our special guest, special guest coming from Sweden, representing the presidency of the European Union Council, Susanna Mattsson, Sweden's counselor to the ITU but Deputy Director of the Ministry of Finance of Sweden. The floor is yours and let's welcome here on stage.

(Applause.)

>> SUSANNA MATTSSON: Thank you. It is a great pleasure to be here and not only as Swedish ITU counselor but also as a special guest. It could also have been very exciting to be the secret guest. But this is fine.

It is a pleasure for me to participate in the opening segment of the RDF for Europe and also a great pleasure for me to visit Timisoara. It is the first time for me here and I enjoy being in Bucharest. So think I will enjoy very much being here in Timisoara as well. I would like to thank ITU for organizing this event and inviting Sweden in our capacity as President of the EU Council to make this intervention.

The priorities of this Swedish presidency in EU Council are security, competitiveness, green and energy transitions, Democratic values and the rule of law.

Sweden supported Ukraine and Eastern neighborhood is part Swedish development assistance. Our regulator, the PTS as a long-standing cooperation with the Ukrainian regulator, starting with an EU training some ten years ago and then a continuation of a strong engagement bilaterally.

But also under the Eastern regulators for electronic communications. In addition to the EU's upcoming support efforts in the cyber area, Sweden's also bilaterally supporting a project to urgently improve the robustness of Ukraine's Internet access and resist cyber attacks and disruptions and secure access to important digital information. Sweden is proud to be on the ITU Council again. We have long supported to be a driving force in the development and

expansion of telecommunications networks. And mobile telephony at the national, regional and global level.

And as Council member we are committed to continue this endeavor.

We are taking good note of the effectiveness of the European bureau of the ITU that has a very high implementation rates of programs and projects. This really shows that ITU can be effective, productive also with limited resources.

The potential of digital technologies is enormous, but one of the main challenges is to bridge the global digital divide and to bridge the gender digital divide. By empowering girls and young women, we have to encourage girls and young women to seek their education and to choose their careers in the field of ICT. And, of course, there must be affordable connectivity. One of the prerequisites for girls to use digital skills that will help to empower them. Speaking about gender equality, and bridging the gender digital divide, I would like to say a couple of words about what spider an independent ICT for Development center at Stockholm University in Sweden is doing as part of equals EU. Spider is leading work package one which focusing on appraising gender equity in 22EU and non-EU countries in order to make the innovation sector more inclusive and to create more opportunities for female innovation and entrepreneurship.

Tomorrow spider will present more in-depth -- some of the activities they have been working on in each country and they will present their capacity building program for regulators in Sub-Saharan Africa tomorrow. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for this. And Ladies and Gentlemen, this indeed was our -- the concluding message coming from our leaders of the region. I counted we had 13 messages from 13 countries, but also we had the Chairs of the regional and subregional organizations. So I think we got really good Foundation for our discussions on the implementation plans in the future. Which will be happening from tomorrow on in this room.

So thank you very much one more time. I invite all of us to applaud all our speakers.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: I would request you to remain seated because I have also the amazing announcement to make, that just now, we will be witnessing the signing, signature of the special Joint Declaration of strengthening cooperation between ITU and cybersecurity center for western Balkans, including the roll out of the cyber tracks. In order to start the ceremony I would like to invite first Dr. Cosmas Zavazava, our BDT director to say a few words and to be followed by His Excellency, Tadej Rupel. I'm handing the floor over to you.

>> COSMAS ZAVAZAVA: Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to come again to address you. I feel like repeating what all the speakers have been saying. First think is we can only thrive and be successful if we operate on the basis of partnerships. Child Online Protection is important for the next generation, for us to transact e-commerce safely. We have to make sure that the platform is secure. Financial inclusion is an important element for those who are not accessing the banks but for them to use the electronic platform, they must feel secure. Money laundering, we would like to welcome anyone who feels they could be part of this journey and this vision and this dream. I have the pleasure to say we are lucky to have partners who believe in what we believe in. Partners who we can pull resources together so that we can make this world a better place to live in.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much and now I would like to invite Excellency, Tadej Rupel to take the floor.

>> TADEJ RUPEL: Thank you so much. So I would like just to say that ITU endeavors to close the digital divide and leverage the power of ICTs as an accelerator of sustainable development and achievement of the SDGs in the European region and globally are admirable.

As we all know, connectivity is shaping the quality of our lives on a daily basis. They are imperative for education, work services and meaningful participation. It is therefore crucial to take

decisive steps to ensure accessible inclusive, safe, secure and sustainable connectivity for all. Digital transformation is success only if all members of society is equally included and no one is left behind at the global level. Slovenia is particularly concerned about the gender digital divide. Women are significantly underrepresented in almost all areas of ICT education employment, and entrepreneurship and leadership. Empowering women with digital skills enables them to fully participate in democracy, education and businesses in the digital society. That's why we are delighted to support and collaborate with the ITU in our joint efforts towards universal connectivity that brings impact to society, business and development and gender equality. The unique matchmaking program partners to connect digital coalition provides an opportunity for all of us to pledge concrete initiatives to advance digital development in the region. Contributing to the recognition and peer to peer learning. Slovenia has so far contributed on the three P to C initiative us. The first one through support of Ukraine and second -- and third will upgrade through today's partnership announcement which aims to cybersecurity building. Slovenia with France and -- with an aim to contribute to the global efforts for peace and stability in cyberspace. In 2022 we have established the western Balkans center. The project was also announced last year as a joint pledge to partner to connect. Exchange of information and good practices and training courses are aiming to strengthen the cyber culture, develop the expertise of active practitioners and create a regional cooperation network.

The center is also introducing cyber curriculum in university of the region through the cooperation of academic institutions from the region as well as Slovenia and France. It is my great pleasure that Slovenia and France are signing a Declaration with ITU and this is our great honor. Slovenia has come a long way to connect our citizens and to develop resilient and ICT ecosystem. We stand ready to share our knowledge and best practices to bridge digital divide globally. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Excellency. And I would like to now invite Excellency, to join director of the Development Bureau to the desk where this official signing ceremony will take place. And we will have the pleasure to witness the signing ceremony which is an important rollout. We would like to thank all partners involved in this. And just to manage your expectations, after the signing ceremony we will have a short presentation of I promise two minutes of this what we are talking, what we will doing. Our project manager is -- has already joined us online and we'll be connected just in a second. But first let's witness the signing ceremony. Silence is also the language. But this is I think the sign of happiness, all of us, we are really happy that it is happening just now. And we encourage, of course, many of you, involved in the international projects to use effectively in the ITU platform for the implementation of the projects.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Fantastic. So thank you very much, Ladies and Gentlemen. So now it is the moment when I will invite our colleagues to connect to Geneva and our project manager, Jasmine, I'm handing over to you, not more than two minutes. Because otherwise we will hear the bell. Jasmine, are you with us?

>> Yes. Am I audible?

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Fantastic.

>> Thank you so much. Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, after this joyous signing ceremony I have the pleasure to further elaborate on what's the first edition of our cyber tracks initiative. It is to promote the equal, full and meaningful representation of women in cybersecurity. The aim is to provide targeted capacity building to help close the gender capacity and workforce gaps that are still very persistent in the field. 2023 will see the implementation of the cybersecurity policy and cyber diplomacy track offering targeted activities that are engaging in national, international, cybersecurity processes and negotiations. In Europe we will be targeting women from western Balkans as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Selected participants will embark on a five

month journey. We will be building capacity through curated online and in person expert training courses to recruit women with both technical and have self-skills to shape international and national cybersecurity policies. Positive role models of women in cybersecurity inspire and empower other women to further actively participate in the field. Keynote webinars and networking meetings will be organized to start to shift the perception of women as valuable additions to the cybersecurity workforce.

Last is the mentorship is sharing of best practices. A tailored mentorship program will provide a platform through women in senior positions can mentor and foster the professional policy growth. The program for 2023 will be running from June to November. Selected participants will be expected to commit to the full five months and attend some online prepare for sessions, mentor meetings and online and offline trainings. We are looking to receive a high number of women leaders from the target countries. We encourage you to share this opportunity with anyone that you think may benefit from it.

While most of the program happens online with a full curriculum of trainings, webinars and mentor ship sessions it will culminate in to a multi-day Forum. It will include the following. One full day interactive training. Simulation exercise, as well as a masterclass on negotiation skills and some networking events. We are thrilled to confirm to now that these activities for the region will take in the western Balkans cyber capacity center. I thank the governments of France, Slovenia for this. And as much a limited number of sponsorships for travel and accommodations will be available to participants. Cyber tracks program is a collaborative effort and we're here to promote the meaning participation of the women in the field. We will try to provide comprehensive training and inspire role models and fostering mentorship.

Together let us come together to seize this opportunity and shape an inclusive future for cybersecurity. I invite you to share this opportunity widely and to invite people around to apply. Thank you very much.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. And warmest

greetings to Geneva. We are looking forward to your applications. The deadline is 29 of May. Ladies and Gentlemen, this really brings us to the coffee break. So thank you very much for your patience. I want to make two announcements. One I will do myself. But the second one will be done by our host, Alexander is already ready to make this. If you allow I will say -- make my part first. So Ladies and Gentlemen, before we will get the coffee which I was promised is delicious, we also are invited to be part of the photography which will be taken outside on the stairs behind this building.

So please follow our staff. Please make sure that no one, really no one stays here in this room because we cannot miss anyone. But before we are proceeding with going, I see that you are ready willing to have the coffee. So that's why I invite our colleagues from ANCOM to provide more details on this -- on what is in front of us in five minutes. And also in the evening. So over to you.

>> Hello, everyone. Dear guests on behalf of ANCOM I have announcement to make. Please allow me to read it. So the host team has the pleasure to invite to you a special social event taking place outside Timisoara. More precisely around 50 kilometers away but still in Timisoara. We will provide a free shuttle from the hotel. The shuttle will leave from the Main Street entrance at 6:30. Of course, we will also provide a shuttle for the return journey. So we would be very honored to join us.

(Switching captioners)

>> VALENTINA STADNIC: Good evening. Hopefully everybody managed to join the session. Welcome to our session on the building upon the outcomes of the ITU conferences and UN processes towards the results of impact oriented regional actions in Europe.

I would like to start by setting the context for the presentation, so, please, team. Thank you. So, we are speaking here about the European regions as the priorities but what is the Europe region about? It is about the countries and more than 750 million inhabitants. In our work with the Member States the office for Europe is dedicated to fostering the goals of the International Telecommunications Union, therefore it

is imperative to acknowledge the role played by conferences where our membership exchanges in discussions and deliberating -- (Off mic)

You can change the slide. So, yeah, sorry. Our members exchange discussions relating to how the ITU should contribute to the national, regional and global work. These conferences serve a vital platform that enables us to shape our valid proposition align with the expectations and needs of the RRSB conference for the period of 2024-2027 and all contributors have built upon the outcomes of the conferences which the IG Office for Europe takes into account while implementing them on the ground.

Particularly within the development sector, we must highlight the upcoming roles on the International Telecommunications Union and the preparations already under way for the next year. We are looking at the ITG priorities encompassing affordable connectivity, Digital Transformation, enabling policy, inclusive and secure telecommunications for sustainable development and resource mobilization and international cooperation.

The leveraging of the regional initiative Resolution of the ITU Office for Europe, plus the comprehensive approach that encompasses all sectors. Our framework comprises of five key offerings to our members. The governance and membership at the regional level, regional engagement and cooperation, As for Europe and beyond Europe and the system. This offerings enable us to address the priorities defined by the Member States and adopted at the development conference.

Whether it involves digital even exclusion of skills development, building just and confidence in ITUs our approach remains you all-encompassing. The same goes to our special initiatives. We have a lot of them, but some of them are reflected right now on the screen, and it covers the partner2connect, the generation connect, the ITU acad by training centres and more, so, thank you.

This is why this session aims to discuss the membership on how to better translate the political missions into action on the ground as one ITU.

I have the pleasure to be joined on this session by remarkable speakers. I will start by introducing them one by one and giving them the Floor. So, Ms. Inga Rimkeviciene, Advisor on International Cooperation, Chair of the Project Team on Strategic ITU-D Issues, Com-ITU, CEPT and Vice Chair of TDAG. You have the Floor.

>> INGA RIMKEVICIENE: Thank you very much for setting the context, and thank you to the organisers for inviting me here. We will have really an amazing sessions tomorrow, about specific implementation and specific actions for Europe, as well as after the GGDC. I also think it will be a good opportunity to share with you the general ideas, last year I do have three conferences and also discussions globally on the digital framework, so I think it will be a good moment to reflect a bit on that and how it will impact the bulk of ITU and also the region in the future.

So, first of all, as mentioned in the opening speech, ITU is the UN family member. And for us, the administrations and member cities, it is important to know what the developments are going into the UN system, and as for Europe, we expect that our regional office will be our eyes in this UN system, and you will guide and inform us about the global processes so that these global trends can be incorporated and transformed in our regional initiatives and our regional strategies, and also taken further to the National levels.

And, also, how can we work together with other UN agencies for achieving common goals and looking for and finding the proper synergies of action.

And moving back to ITU after the GGDC and we had the discussion with the colleagues there are more and more topics coming from other sectors, the development sector.

Also there are topics that cannot be dealt as separate sectors separately. So, these are some horizontal topics just as Gender Equality, youth, also, Human Rights, the digital world and many more that go beyond one sector. So, we should identify and deal with these topics holistically, looking for collaboration on all levels.

To find the synergies within the ITU and also synergies for the sectors, and we hope that also our Regional Office will have its role in the operational level under the one ITU concept.

It is important to know what is happening in all three sectors to avoid duplications of efforts, but if there are Good Practices and good initiatives, these could be also used for other purposes, and maybe even transform for better.

And another important factor is engaging all ITU membership and building partnerships, especially in the participation of the Private Sector. We talk about that constantly, but I think it is really time to give more energy to this idea.

ITU has hundreds of Sector Members and it is really a huge potential, and huge ocean of knowledge that could be engaged in our work in our activities.

So, we have to find ways of closer cooperation with our Sector Members, not only for Fundraising, but also for the Private Sector as our advisers, equal partners, in building regional strategies, common initiatives and implementing them.

So, this is a task that I think TDAG will focus more in its work because it is established focal points and also as the Chair of reparations for ITU-D I hope we will focus more than one way and beyond.

Expressing our appreciations to the DPT and the Regional Office and the ITU-D issues we promise to work hard, to seek for the best ways on the impactful results. Thank you very much.

>> VALENTINA STADNIC: Thank you, Inga. We have Ms. Blanca Gonzalez, Head of Unit at the Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Telecommunications and Digital Infrastructures, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation, and Vice Chair of TDAG joining us. The Floor is yours.

>> BLANCA GONZALEZ: Chair, Excellencies, it is a pleasure for me to intervene in the session at the Vice-Chair of the communications development Advisory Group.

In order to achieve the synergies it is important to encourage participation in the ITU event. In my view there are two important meetings. ITU meetings that will shape the future of the development sector for our region and worldwide.

TDAG and the -- TDAG will meet in Geneva from June 19 to 23 and we will focus on the implementation of the outcomes of the world International Telecommunications Union last year and the conference we held in July, July 11 to July 21, also in Geneva, and among other issues, it will approve the ITU by union budget.

We look forward. We encourage participation to be able to have a successful outcome that will allow for the BDT to continue its current activities and undertake new challenges but exploring new sources of funding, such as the Partner2Connect initiative. I would like to say that Spain, I will represent our two commitments to the Partner2Connect initiative. So I encourage you to participate.

And Spain will be succeeding Sweden at the Presidency of the EU next September and we plan to continue our work with our colleagues in giving visibility to the EU in the ITU, especially in the development activities such as the Global Gateway, and Digital for Development Hub, among others. But also as Mr. Ponder indicated earlier, the EU regulatory framework, and with this, thank you very much for your attention.

Thank you.

>> VALENTINA STADNIC: Thank you so much.

So, in order to continue I would like to invite Mr. Fabio Bigi, Expert with the Ministry for Business and Made in Italy, Chair of the Intersector Coordination Group on issues of mutual interest, to take the Floor, but I believe we can --

>> FABIO BIGI: It was a pleasure to talk to you for these Intersector Coordination Groups, to which at least one of the previous speakers, Inga is taking part, because she is presenting the sector and the one from Europe, the Chairman of the ITT Study Group 5, also a member for the Intersector, six members, and the Chair of TDAG.

We have governed by as usual 191, the last in Bucharest. There was usually amended and there was more participation requested for the Regional Office, and that is the reason why our last meeting on the 2nd of May would invite those of the Regional Office to follow. And the meeting's intention is to have every time participation of members of one sector having the meeting together. We tried to avoid the duplication of effort.

For example, the mapping table for the request and activity of the various sectors where the sector can see where it is possible or lacking, but at the end it depends on the membership, because if the membership decided to send the Resolution to a given sector, the Intersector Coordination Groups can only point out what is here for each administration.

We also make the request for the mapping table Resolution, the membership here present is to make a Resolution for each sector.

If there is a preventive solution only a matter of relevance for the sector. So, to complement the Coordination Group, that is the philosophy. We have selected two teams for the time-being.

The two teams are accessibility, which is very important and we thank you for the activity this field and also in the restricted budgets with the amount of money for this activity and we have the Climate Change Award so it is important for this time of year.

We also have a group dealing with the question of remote participation, because, again, we want to avoid that each sector -- I understand the sector are different scopes and purposes, however, if at all possible to have a unified approach, also for remote participation.

The team suggests on depending on the membership, membership-wide. They represent the sector, but also the older members can address questions.

There is the question, for example, making uniform the website or ITU because there are differences in, again, in the various sectors areas, but all that depends also on your cooperation. So I appreciate you cooperate and the next meeting of the group is in October. Because of TDAG and TSAG two approaches to two meetings, so we invite you in October to attend the meeting.

You can see on the website there is a link. Okay. Thank you for your attention, and please to respond.

>> VALENTINA STADNIC: Thank you so much, Dr. Bigi. The next will be invited to take the Floor, Mr. Toni Janevski, European Vice Chair, ITU Group on Capacity Building Initiative, Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies, North Macedonia. We are welcoming you on stage.

>> TONI JANEVSKI: Thank you for the introduction. Hello to everyone. Well, we have heard a lot here, of course, everybody is working on different subjects at the moment, but I will speak from another angle, and coming from a capacity-building initiatives in the region, how we can create the synergy between all of you, all of us on one side, and ITU on the other side.

So, what this means? This means, in fact, we are in a circle where in one side contributors, and from the other side we are taking the services.

For example, what are the ITU services from my point of view, as I understand it. There are many recommendations. There are different reports, strategies, statistical data, technical assistance for

different countries and Developing Countries and registration and so on.

On the other side all of us are contributing either for working for regulators, Academia, Governments or Private Sector companies and different Study Groups and bodies of the ITU.

So, this is one circle, I will say. How we can increase the synergy? Well, from my experience, with over 15 years providing and tutors and organises the ITU umbrella, I can say that many people from the sector, especially Governments and regulators, need to also do capacity building in emerging fields, like beyond, 20300 industrial IOT, Artificial Intelligence, other forms of Artificial Intelligence, cloud and so on. Why?

When they finish their formal education they probably could not have seen this existing at the start. We are a very fast-changing field, the telecommunications, to my point of view, and we need to continue with capacity-building, also people working from regulators and Governments and Private Sectors in different fields, including executives because they must get knowledge from somewhere to make the justified decisions.

Also IT engineers, managers, people working in the IT Department and so on. ITU in the past and now has training centres that deliver high quality targeted for all of you, and many more around the world, not only in the region of Europe. The rest of the world. We are not limited only to this region.

Of course, we have many initiatives, probably you will see many of them tomorrow, as far as there are many contributions from different countries and sites, but at the end of the day, we are working globally, because ICT Telecommunications provide different types for different people.

We can see the portfolio, spectrum, we can see, for example, coordination of legislation, we can see broadband infrastructure, what to do and how, because at its end it needs to have similar networks in

different countries so they can inter-operate, one with another so we can have global connectivity where service connected in one country can deliver services in another country, which speaks to each.

So, I have a reminder that I should gloss this speech, so the synergy is, everybody should promote actions for the ITU and participation in activities, including the capacity-building activities, which is very important, and on the other side, ask for the ITU, for example, technical assistance, when needed, or, let's say, participate in the participation of Study Groups, et cetera, for example people coming from developed countries that they contribute for the leading edge on the other side, and on the other side people from Developing Countries, maybe, in transition, which, of course, use the Best Practices for, let's say developed economies and so on.

So, I can talk much more than this, but I think this is enough for today. So, thank you for the opportunity.

(Applause)

>> VALENTINA STADNIC: Thank you Dr. Janevski. And the last speaker with us today on stage is Ms. Mindel Van de Laar, Head Capacity Development Office, United Nations University, The Netherlands. So, please, the Floor is yours.

>> MINDEL VAN DE LAAR: Thank you all for inviting me. I would like to acknowledge at the start that probably a part of what I am going to share with you is complimentary, or duplication of the previous speaker.

As a Union Merit, we are also one of the ITU Academy Members and new Academy Members, and we are very happy that the ITU took the initiative to combine knowledge, institutions, to share what we know with you as practitioners.

We obviously understand that knowledge-sharing is key, but knowledge-sharing doesn't always come from formal knowledge. A lot of the knowledge-sharing we know comes from peer learning. It is very

clear from the previous talks today that a lot of the peer learning among yourselves already happens.

We entirely acknowledge that, but we also see this goes beyond the region. It is not only within Europe we should be learning from each other, but also across the world, and we should tap into experiences in other continents and learn from what other continents have done, and also have not done or have not done that well.

So, we shouldn't only exchange our successes, but we should also share among each other more what didn't work for each one of us so we can learn from our failures.

Beyond peer learning, I think sharing resources more openly would be very beneficial. Clearly, for instance, as a University we have our knowledge system, and a lot of my colleagues would know a lot about digitization and technology. The way for us to translate to you in a way that is useful for to you learn from us can be improved upon.

So, we should learn more how to bridge practitioner experience with Academia, and we are happy to talk with you about how to do that better. At the same time, we will also invite you to actually think of the data wealth that you have that may have gone unexplored, may not have been evaluated well, so that you have done and invested a lot in your policy initiatives, but we don't really know if things worked or not, because not often they are properly evaluated.

So, I guess within Academia and within the ITU learning academy you can find a lot of cooperation not only in sharing knowledge and resources, but also jointly undertaking activities to make policy work better in the digitization field. Thank you.

>> VALENTINA STADNIC: Thank you. And to build upon the message that our membership shared with us, I would like to invite two of our colleagues from the ITU who joined us remotely to also take the Floor.

We would like to find out from them, based on their perspective and experience of working in different sectors, as well as building upon the outcomes of different conferences, what opportunities they see or

has collaboration between sectors and what examples come to mind when they hear about the cooperation digital sectors. So, I have Mr. Bilel Jamoussi, Chief of the Study Groups Department at Standardization Bureau, International Telecommunication Union, feel free to take the Floor.

>> BILEL JAMOUSSE: Thank you very much. Good afternoon and thank you for inviting me today remotely. We have many good examples of strong collaboration within ITU to deliver effectively to our members in Europe. Certainly within the context of our Strategic Plan on Universal Connectivity and Sustainable Visual Transformation, as well as approaching the ITU as one ITU.

We have had recently several interesting engagements. For instance, in Europe we had a session with the European Union, Geneva and invited with the ITU Management to explain the gameplan and priorities of work within the IT sector and engagements directly with our colleagues, for example, in the development of it is GUF Stack there is a lot of standards from TSD directly on the GUF Stack on Mobile Payment Systems and Cybersecurity.

In terms of Accessible Europe, many of the Standards of Accessibility have been shared and we have common participation of ITT and ITU staff.

On recent technologies in terms of emerging new topics the Metaverse has been a topic of great interest internationally and especially in Europe. We have been invited to the European Union for hearings and briefings, in Brussels, looking at potential threats and issues to be resolved.

We leveraged the platform of the ITU to look at training online, where we have recorded courses that are self-paced, currently offered in English and Spanish, and we are in the process of providing those in six languages of the ITU.

We have a monthly meet that includes the regional area directors. And, of course, we have collaboration with TSB management on a monthly basis

to explore upcoming events and how we synergize the input from TSB and the ITU to support the European region.

These are some of the examples in terms of how we leverage people, expertise, platforms, and new emerging technologies to really bring to our members in Europe the most effective, most productive and impactful collaboration between the sectors.

With the European Telecom Standards Institute we have a good collaboration when it comes to sustainability standards. Dr. Bigi mentioned the Chairman from Europe for our Study Group 5 on environmental issues, EMF, EMC.

And in June we will have our meeting jointly between the SE and it in collaboration with the European Stakeholders. So, hopefully this gives you an idea of the work we are doing together.

We are always happy to hear your feedback of any improvements, anything we can do better, we will always be happy to hear that from you. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

>> VALENTINA STADNIC: And -- thank you, and last but not least is Nick Sinanis, Study Group Advisor, Radiocommunication Bureau, International Telecommunication Union. Nick, the Floor is yours.

>> NICK SINANIS: Thank you. Good afternoon. I would like to say a few words of the communication sector to ensure the efficient economic look at the spectrum, benefiting the many sectors of the IDU and ITU-D. The spectrum, the acceleration of the Digital Transformation and the bridging of the digital divide, more than a timely introduction of the Emergency Communication Disaster Prediction, the communication issue.

The IT on the limitation of the space 2030 Agenda, and the collaboration of the sustainable development of the space as a driver. The Communication Sector benefits from this collaboration but addressing its challenges of new, emerging technologies like, for instance, Artificial Intelligence, and ensuring the spectrum resources will be available through part of the future, what we call meaningful connectivity.

In closing, the 191 revised in Bucharest last year, as mentioned by Dr. Bigi, strategy for the coordination of the sectors to provide the concise framework for the Intersector activities. The Intersector collaboration could be achieved with more joint workshops promotes these activities. Thank you very much for inviting me.

>> VALENTINA STADNIC: Thank you, thank you so much to our remote and on-site speakers.

To be very cautious of time I will try to wrap up the session really quickly, so bear with me for a couple more minutes. I would like to conclude the session with a couple of highlights that remain for me as the most important from this interventions.

So, we do have a framework in place for this one ITU delivery and for the -- corporation toward this goal. We are aiming to achieve the accelerated transformation and a meaningful connectivity on the -- on our planet, in Europe and even in space, so there is a lot of potential to reach.

We do focus on a lot of elements which are core to our activities, and which are fully aligned with the regional priorities, and even more, we do have a lot of initiatives and joint projects that are proving that this approach is already working, and that we can even more advance on our efforts if we try to make the work together.

So, I invite -- I want to thank you, once again, thank you, the speakers, once again, and invite all of you to join these efforts and reach the new results together, and be even more efficient than we currently are.

So, is thank you so much.

>> SARAH DELPORTE: Hello, everyone. I would like to invite the special speakers today. Please bear with us until we can enjoy the various features.

Taking we have all of our speakers in the room, otherwise I might have to run outside and gather them.

Okay. Perfect. Thank you.

Okay, thank you very much. With this it is my great pleasure to start and welcome you to this final panel of today's first day of Forum.

So, I just introduced to you our speakers that are on-site, but we are also joined with virtual participants, so we will also have with us today, Ms. Ingrid MacDonald, Resident Coordinator, UN Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We will also have Mr. Nabil Gangi, Deputy Regional Representative, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, FAO.

And, finally, we will have Ms. Daniela Di Dianantonio, Digital Agriculture Team Leader, FAO Regional Office of Europe and Central Asia, FAO.

So, thank you very much for joining us today for this very important topic in order to properly and better deliver to our Member States and all the partners across Europe and beyond, which is the role of the One UN approach to advance digital development with the ITU as being the specialized agency for digital.

Before I join our panelists, I would like to give you a brief overview of the ITU Europe to give you a very small glimpse of it.

So, I would ask for a display of the slides, please.

Okay, thank you very much for bearing with me. So, the ITU has various engagements, more specifically has various engagements with the system at the country and regional level. And starting with the regional level, the ITU Office for Europe is Co-chairing two Working Groups which are critical to ensure the approach and delivery and ensure no duplication effort is being made and one is the UN Digital Transformation group for Europe and Central Asia, and the other one is the UN Brussels teams Task Force on digitization for the SDGs. Both groups are engaging about 20 UN agencies each.

So, we are very pleased to Co-chair from this first group, and also the second group with the credit from the UN Project Office Brussels.

To give you an overview of what the UN digital transformation group in Europe and Central Asia is and what does it do concretely. We are established on the regional platform for Europe and Central Asia which gather different groups and different issue bases as we call them, coalitions focused on transformative issues that need to be addressed to support the Member States in the region, and, of course, digital development being one of them.

And we are focusing on four MPRs to strengthening the information sharing of the UN system. To reinforce the cooperation and collaboration of the UN agencies. We are very proud that the groups have helped to build and reinforce existing ones, as well. We also promote support to the UN Member States and our colleagues in the European Region.

There are a lot of different activities we have undertaken as part of the group. We support the processes as listed before from the regional and sustainable developments and the achievements thanks to digital.

We also elaborate multiple documents that can support the delivery of the UN system and other Stakeholders in the European Region.

But one I would really like to focus on is the UN Digital Development Toolkit. You have heard this several times during the day, but what exactly is the toolkit. It is a supports, measurement tools, capacity tools that can be used in your delivery of the project and initiative to advance digital development on the ground.

So, it aims to support the teams in the delivery and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Corporation framework, which is the framework as most of you know together is together with the Government synergies.

They focus on three pillars, access, safe and reliable ICT infrastructure, adoptions of the affordable inclusive structures and the value creations. So I invite you to have a look at the report and we will be happy to show more.

And the UN Brussels team Task Force, as we like to call the UNBT digital TF, we look at the approaches with the EU, how do we voice a

joint UN approach to the European Commission, the European Union and the effort of Brussels to make sure the policies and initiatives that are being put forward at the Brussels level are aligned with the SDG vision and the One UN Vision.

Here again we have many different activities undertaken but one ongoing at the moment is a series of dialogues with the European Commission. And those were put in place together with the digital connect and other partners to discuss the extensive policy discussion on the priorities put forward by the European Commission on digital divide, and also includes the priorities of the UN.

So, we have already discussed, for example, the matters of Human Rights and Gender, Artificial Intelligence, and we will now discuss about Disinformation and Digital Skills. This helps us to see what the information challenges, the opportunities and how we can better collaborate the approach to digital development.

And now if we look at the country level. We also have a very brief mention in the opening ceremony on the Digital Development profiles. The ITU is engaging in the UN Country Teams and the European Region, being a non-resident so we are working collaboratively with the UN Country Team peers to development advancement and advocate at the digital country level and we will hear examples in a few seconds with our panelists here today.

But one main element that the ITU is providing to the UN Country Team is the Digital Development country profile, an analysis of the current situation of the Digital Development ecosystem at the country level that we are doing jointly with the UN Country Team. This is meant to be a document to tap into the expertise of all the UN agencies and have a bayou for support with the different synergies and partners at the country level.

So, this concludes the small participation to start the panel but now I will invite the panelists to start the discussion. Thank you.

Thank you very much for your attention. I am happy to start the discussion on the UN engagement and One UN engagement. I would like to start with a question to Dimitri, can you tell us, what is your take and how do you see the cooperation in the European Region between the UN agencies and can you reflect briefly on what has been changing over the last year and where should we head with that? Thank you.

>> DMITRY MARIYASIN: Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to be on the stage again. We feel -- I will start actually with the second part of your question. We feel there is a significant change in the level of interest coming from the UN Country Teams, and I hope that we will hear more from the resident Coordinators today, their voice when it concerns the programme countries is really important.

Secondly, I think among the UN agencies there is a growing realization that ITU has a unique role in the system, a unique mandate and set of tools and is already connected to a vibrant ecosystem of Government players like yourself and all the UN agencies can really benefit from it.

And third, I think there is a profound realization on the lack of the understanding and skills within the UN system to capture the complex subject offer digitization applied to the respective mandates of the UN agencies.

So I think these three changes other the past couple of years, as well as the global drive from the UN Secretary General and the Digital Transformation group globally, the appointment of the special technology point to the fact we are coming together as a system on this.

Now, there are many processes that contribute to it. I believe you need several things and the focus, you know, of UDC gives several things.

First, the level of awareness is quite low when it comes to cross-sectoral collaborations. So, a given ministry in the Government would not be aware of what digitalization standard is unfortunately despite the best efforts of the colleagues in the room, same for the UN

agencies. In the UN system we need to have a One UN approach where we connect.

Secondly, link between the Innovation Agenda and the Digitalization Agenda. It is very important that we channel the digital advances, including emerging technologies, in such a way that they favor sustainable development, not reverse development gains, and this is where the innovation ecosystem needs to be brought to bear we have we were just discussing, why not join forces more systematically when we do the UN Sustainable Development reviews with the Digital Development reviews that ITU does in countries.

Thirdly, data. Digitalization creates a whole new range of data that is available to practitioners and policymakers. If you take, agencies like UNICEF that work a lot on data issues, what does the work of ITU mean for UNICEF's availability, granularity on data on the administration of children and so on. These are questions we would like to see happening.

Els, I won't be able to expand because my time is up, but digital and green nexus. We haven't heard a lot on this today, but what is the role on the ITC sector on generating emissions and curving emissions and also how that relates to the world of finance systematically.

We would like to tackle from the UNECE's approach to private partnerships, infrastructure developments and a link between the conversation we are having here and the conversation happening in the impact investment ecosystem where the digital and green are brought together, under, for example, the rubric of SDG bonds, something I haven't heard yet mentioned, but, indeed, very important.

Thank you.

>> SARAH DELPORTE: Thank you so much, Dimitri, for all the great pointers and food for thoughts to take further with us. We understand through your statement there is a need for more cross-coordination and also for more information-sharing at the country level and across the UN agencies. Thank you very much for this point.

In fact, we would now like to turn to our online speaker to hear from perspective from the country level. We have the great pleasure to have with us Ms. Ingrid MacDonald, Resident Coordinator, UN Bosnia and Herzegovina. I would like to check that she is here with us, first, online. If so, if she could answer any questions, which is, several questions, in fact, if she could give her reflection on what are your expectations when you give at the joint delivery of the UN system, and how do you see the strategy role of the ITU and why should ITU strengthen its supports on the Country Teams.

>> INGRID MACDONALD: Can you hear me? I think Dimitri said a lot in terms of the benefits and different areas very eloquently, much more eloquently than how I would say it.

In the UN system, as you know, we have cooperation frameworks. The cooperation frameworks are supposed to be a tool that we pull together all the work that the United Nations system undertakes in a country to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals in a given period, and it is in agreement with the supports. So we have this that covered 2021 to 2025.

Now for us what was also very useful, we have 18 agency funds and programmes. Some are residents and some are non-residents. Of course, Dimitri represents one of the institutions that is part of it, as does ITU.

And one of the reasons why the UN Country Team here is interested in having ITU become part of the configuration of the Country Team and Country is because of the expertise that it brings, but also the standards, the mandate, the engagement, that it brings not only in terms of Europe, but also internationally. For those of you that know us, we have Green Energy and Climate Change that requires investment upfront in policy, regulations, finance and delivering change for tomorrow. Digital Transformation is a complex issue touching on issues from broadband availability to sectorial strategies.

It is not just also -- I think to Dimitri's point about whole of Government is very important here. It often gets put into a communications area, or these. I think we could talk about this, as well with Nabil, we see it equally relevant with healthcare, education. But we know small, fragmented projects will not deliver what is needed, as we are going to be true to the Secretary General's -- oh, God, I only have 28 seconds.

The joint delivery of the UN agencies allows for greater outcomes of Member States. The ITU Digital Development country profile it developed for Herzegovina brings together the initiatives across the agencies and sectors in cooperation with Government. Here we hope to be, and work toward, being in a more predictable, more effective and whole of system approach partner to governance.

This is important because we have the EU candidacy for Bosnia and Herzegovina. And one of the key priorities is Digital Transformation, particularly with EU Governance. This is important for business and all parts of the economy.

If you want to sell a piece of land, buy a house or do any form of documentation, so this is where it comes together.

I am sorry, I don't know if you want me to talk about the support to the Country Team and the good examples, but I will leave it there with you. Because we have a lot of good examples from here, as well.

>> SARAH DELPORTE: Thank you for sharing your perspective, Ingrid. Unfortunately, as we are running out of time, also we would love to hear about more examples but we cannot accommodate it. We would be very happy to continue this conversation in another setting.

Also, thank you for pointing out really the globalization that Digital Development brings not only the opportunities but, also, the opportunities and changes and the reasons we need to better coordinate at a country, regional and global level across the UN Agencies to really address all the Digital Development aspects.

So, on this note, I would like to pass the Floor to my colleague sitting right next to me, Mr. Sharma. I would like to hand the Floor to you. Thank you.

>> Hello, colleagues of the UN, as we talk about the role of the UN systems in achieving the Digital ITU in fast-checking the SDGs. I am giving you a specific example here of the education sector.

First, starting with the problem. The problem of the challenge of connecting the schools. Nearly half of 6 million schools in this world are not connected to the internet today, and most of them are affecting the poorest and hardest to connect.

About half a billion students do not have access to internet. And as you know by now, that 2.7 billion unconnected people, the majority of them are women and girls. So, the disconnected children are more at risk across health, identity, Gender Equity, education and many other issues. We have also talked about the Resolution 87 plan which gives the mandate for ITU of connecting all the schools by 2030.

Now, what is the solution? This is a specific example. ITU, along with UNICEF, have launched in 2019 the Giga initiative with the object I have to connect every school to the internet and every young person to opportunities and choices. the achievements as you see here, the initiative is active with 19 countries, 14 partners and 20 host countries.

We are grateful for the support from the Switzerland Government, the Spanish Government, Catalonia Regional Government and the Barcelona City Council.

How does this work? We map the location of schools and monitor the school connectivity status in realtime. And the model and helping Governments contract the connectivity.

This is one example of the infrastructure maps that can help provide better connectivity. For instance, we focused on school connectivity. You can see on the left the example of line of site -- connectivity of the towers. This provides a very clear look at the structure and

identifying the most optimal solutions for the technology, the realistic estimate of the cost and the support of the project.

Here are two quick examples. Kyrgyzstan in the region through school location and connectivity mapping the Government realized they were paying the connectivity of the large number of the schools but they were not actually connected. They adjusted the cost and lowered it and it doubled.

And on the right from Rwanda, you can see this model on the connecting of Giga. The average price cost 30% to 55% and 400% improvement in the global connectivity.

I am grateful for you folks here in Europe and the ITF, and the Government for hosting the Global Giga Global Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Spanish Government and Catalonia Regional Government for hosting our technology centre, as well as Barcelona City Council.

We are proud of the jointly published report connectivity in education. There are two different phases. And both Bosnia and Herzegovina are two of the offices connecting the broadband mapping system and connectivity. Thank you very much for your attention.

>> SARAH DELPORTE: Thank you very much. Thank you for your concrete example on how we can collaborate from global to international. And we are talking from the beginning about the importance of cooperation and how this can help maximize the delivery, the joint delivery to our Member States.

And with this, I would like to hand over the Floor to our colleagues from the FAO, which we are very proud to partner for many years now on the topic of digital agriculture and an example of how original to maximize together the impact on the ground.

So I would like to hand this to the Floor to my colleague online, from the Regional Office of Europe and Central Asia, FAO, Nabil Gangi. Please go ahead.

>> NABIL GANGI: Can you hear me? I am so glad to be here and discuss the topic of great importance for our collective future. One UN for Digital Development. In Europe with ITU as the UN Agency, in an increasingly connected world, where digital technologies permit every aspect of our lives and all sectors of the economy, we see digital technologies entering in every facet of our lives in production lines and services, to communication and entertainment. In fact, digital technology cannot exist in isolation.

However, with that, we have seen another gap connected to other existing gaps as we have heard. Many gaps existing in our work, wealth, development, gender, just to name a few.

It is high time to embrace digital technologies in a strategic manner in the realm of agriculture and harness the transformative power to drive sustainable development in a manner that leaves no one behind.

This goes hand-in-hand with the encompassing sector of agriculture which lies at the core of our societies and sustains our very existence.

In sustaining our very existence, agriculture needs to adopt revolutionary practices to enhance productivity, improve resource management, increase access to markets and ultimately ensure security
Forum.

However, our ability to leverage digitalization in a way that leaves no one behind will determine the success of our Sustainability Development. It is for this reason that FAO adopted an innovation strategy with digital technology at its core, the accelerator of the strategic objective I have to build on the four pillars of better production, better communication, better for environment for all, for a better life.

And the organisations in part embark on a longstanding resource and network to advance digital agriculture in the region.

Wednesday we will explore the achievements and practical tools today for policy needs in bridging the digital divide and the transformative transformation of the agriculture.

Now I will set the Floor for my enabled colleague, Daniela Di Gianantonio, our champion in the office on this topic. Thank you.

>> DANIELA DI DIANANTONIO: Thank you, Nabil, and hello, everyone. It is my pleasure to be here today speaking on Digital Development and specifically Digital Agriculture Development. I hope you can see my slides. The first work is analyzing the status of Digital Agriculture in 18 countries in Europe and Central Asia.

This is an important foundational study that I-75s as a basic assessment and vital tool to look at strategies and policies for Member States and designing our assistance programmes.

The second important piece of work is the Digital Excellency in Agriculture Contest which was an open call for digital solutions. It had more than 170 applicants from Turkiye to Europe and awarded 29 categories of winners, one winner from Romania, actually. If you follow tomorrow's session you will learn more about it.

But let me bring to you the third area of joint work. This is the area on Digital Agriculture EU pre-aseession requirements. We release that many of our Member States and member countries are in critical need for assistance when it comes to meeting the European Union digital standards and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

So, we are now working with ITU in putting together this work in the form of a practical guideline that could be used by pre-aseession countries, as well any other country looking at the EU as a reference. So, let's look at what are these provisions.

The area number one is on National Digital Agriculture Strategies. This is a very important position of the new Common Agriculture Policy, the CAP and Member States are requested to elaborate.

They are requested to elaborate a strategy for digitalization of agriculture in rural areas.

And finally, the UN working together on the EU Strategy Guide and Toolkit at a framework to assist countries in developing national digitalization of agriculture and rural countries. And finally, it will be in Turkiye and across the region in Central Asia at the Potomac.

The area number two is an eGovernment systems for agriculture. There is a range of electronic information systems that Member States need to have in place. For example, the FADN, a critical run, where Member States are required to monitor for income based on harmonized bookkeeping.

Also support in Montenegro and successfully launching in 2022. And currently we are supporting them.

And the third area is on digital farm advisory I services. The CAP provides the farm advisory services should be strengthens to increase the advisory services in the agriculture knowledge and innovation system work in this field.

So, let me take to you the last area. The smart villages. Again, Member States are encouraged to promote the development of smart villages to tackle the rural decline and the digital rural divides.

And you can support barrier countries in the European Region to develop the leader-like approaches and launch the DDI and we share really multiple commonalities with them and with DVI following the support in the Digital Transformation process to address the agrasystem challenges.

So, now let me conclude by saying we are convinced the true collaborative efforts at One UN for Digital Development in Europe, we can realize really immense potential of digital agriculture for the benefit of farmers, rural communities and the overall sustainable development of Europe. To support members of Europe and beyond in accelerating the Digital Transformation in agriculture.

If you are listening to this presentation and would like to elaborate, you can feel welcome to reach out to the email that you see here. Thank you for your attention, and let us continue our collective efforts to shape the digital future that empowers all.

>> SARAH DELPORTE: Thank you so much, Daniella, for the presentation of the joint work and we are proud to partner with the FAO on this topic.

Ms. Ingrid MacDonald was referring to the endeavor of the UN Country Team and this is what we are trying to do with this, to try and support this. I would like to like to hand the Floor over to Mr. Dragan Mladenovic on the Global Standards and how they can be effectively implemented thanks to the UNOPS who has extensive expertise to leading projects at the Community and Local Government level. The Floor is yours.

>> DRAGAN MLADENOVIC: Thank you very much. I would like to extend my thank you for the UNOPS invitation. I am here with my colleague and boss, Ana, sitting right here with me. We have bell grave, Serbia, Montenegro and north Macedonia. UNOPS has extensive experience, actually, in carrying out the development programmes in these areas. The development programmes funded by donors such as the European and European Union, Switzerland Governments and others.

Our focus is at the local level, because we believe working from the grassroots level upwards things can change and change rapidly.

To set the scene for Serbia in terms of what is going on about the digitalization and the introduction of IT technologies, according to the latest 2022 index, Serbia skipped two places upwards in that index, so things are moving very fast in that sense in Serbia. Serbia has appropriate strategy already adopted for digitalization, standard for the creation of information society, and other policy-level documents.

Of course, the non-working framework is also there, so there are laws for supporting all of this. And lately, in 2022 the Government started talking about supporting smart cities. We found that initiative very interesting for us, because in the meantime, we were supporting around

70 Local Governments in Serbia, which is a lot because we are really a very small country.

I am referring to the point, so we actually developed a proposal, you know, covering the governance aspect of -- we believe strongly that it is a very important aspect of introducing smart cities and studying smart cities.

But, of course, we are well aware that having a very well-rounded out proposal to Government is actually missing at this global point of view, so that is why we approach ITU and then, of course, included there, 91U4SSC-KPIs and others that were brought to the proposal.

I think that demonstrates these things are not only about talking the talk, but also walking the walk, in preparing for the real stuff.

Now we have a very concrete and already have some context with Government, with aligning of the industries and the governance supporting the identity and approaches, really the path ITU took and we are ready to implement the joint approach and try to bring I would say in creating a holistic approach.

It requires a governance part, collaboration all over the cities to optimize the process.

>> ANA NADELJKOVIC BELJA: Thank you. I know we are short on time, but the initiative that we are now launching in some way with this presentation, the combined the best of two agencies of the UNOPS expertise that it has and ITU as a really strong digital agency that will actually leverage all the ITU standards that you said, and indicators when we are talking about smart cities. That brings us to the other speakers also talking about the joint approach we can achieve and the national priorities and National Governments when it comes to the Digital Agenda. So, thank you very much for this.

>> SARAH DELPORTE: Thank you very much for this. Not only the ITU Centres but the KPIs that have been working jointly with the UN Agencies and 10 others.

So, thank you very much for the final statement. With this we conclude the second and last panel of today's Forum. In conclusion we can wrap up by saying, yes, we need more UN cooperation. We need to continue and build on it. We need more cross-cutting cooperation across sectors, as well.

Thank you very much for your attention and I would like to hand the Floor back over to Mr. Ponder.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you. I think this was an amazing session on providing a better understanding on how important the UN cooperation is for driving this development. But, talking about the driving of the Digital Development, you cannot remain without innovation and talking about innovation, we talk about the emerging technologies.

And this brings us to the last item of today's Agenda. This is the special announcement of the cooperation between Latvia and the ITU. On this occasion I would like to invite the Director to take the Floor, and also I would like to invite the President of Latvia's Office for Electronic Communications. And together we can represent the ministry, to join us on the stage and provide a few introductory remarks on what is in front of us.

So, I invite you both to take the Floor from the lectern, and after that we will assign the letters exchanged between Europe.

So, the Director, I invite you, or you can speak, also, from there. Whatever you prefer. (Off mic)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: So, I would like to invite first our partner to take the Floor. If you -- please, the Floor is yours.

>> Hello dear friends. I know I am the obstacle between you and a wonderful evening in the winery, that is why we will be very short. I am very thankful for though the six years of fruitful cooperation between ITU and the project -- new board initiative in Riga, in Latvia started local between the Nordic-Baltic countries, and they are not already European wide, but a global platform for the cooperation to

enable the strategy-based emerging technologies, so thank you very much.

Thank you. I hope for a great cooperation in the future. Thank you.

>> So, good afternoon. He says this is the obstacle between you and red. I am the green light. (Chuckles) So, we can move quickly and go ahead. I would like to acknowledge, of course, our great partnership, resilience and forward-looking, and sure, we are going places. We are going to be able to extend the current relationship, which has benefited currently the region to go beyond the region.

Because the greatest scope, and we did develop in our meeting today more which is very fruitful, and we are looking forward to strengthening our relationship, and with that we will be looking to signing an agreement, of course, for us to be able to explore this great potential partnership. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: I would also like to invite our colleagues from the ministry, so -- colleagues, I would like to invite you to proceed to the desk, and proceed with the signing ceremony.

So, colleagues, remain seated. We are observing the signing of the strength of the letters with the intention of strengthening the corporation on 5G with a particular focus on the development of the capacities of the Developing Countries and emerging economies.

So -- Ladies and Gentlemen, congratulations to our partners. We are looking forward as the ITU Office for Europe to greater participation and strengthening our cooperation. I very much look forward to making this happen, and we are looking forward to the next steps.

We will be reporting and updating you on a regular basis.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, this brings us to the end of the day. I think you expected long summary of the day to be provided by us, but the good mercies this would happen as the special event hosted.

So, also, you have the second good news, the host agrees to give us 30 minutes, so, 7:00, if all of you agree, we will meet in front of this hotel and we will have transportation provided, so please don't miss.

I just had a call that we are told not business casual, but just casual, so, understanding it is very different depending on the origins, but here, at least no tie, yes?

(Recording stopped)

(Session was concluded at 10:25 a.m. CT)

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