

High level Segment

Header

Sandra Maximiano

Chairwoman of ANACOM's Board of Directors

Portugal

Session 1

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be here in beautiful Baku. My sincere gratitude to the government of Azerbaijan for hosting this remarkable event.

I would like to focus on three key topics:

- 1. One. International Connectivity**
- 2. Two. Consumer Protection**
- 3. Three. Inclusion — especially the participation and empowerment of women and youth**

I proudly come from Portugal, a country deeply committed to the United Nations system, and with a long-standing vocation to build bridges between regions and cultures.

This brings me to the first topic — **International Connectivity**. Portugal's geography places it at the crossroads of global digital networks. With one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zones in the world and a centuries-long maritime tradition, Portugal has become a key hub for submarine cable landings, connecting continents and strengthening global communication routes.

This privileged position also brings special responsibilities — such as, ensuring the resilience and security of submarine cable systems,

In this regard, I am proud to co-chair the International Advisory Body for

Submarine Cable Resilience, a unique global platform that brings together governments, industry, and international organisations to enhance the resilience of this vital infrastructure that powers our digital future.

The second topic is **Consumer Protection**.

We call upon all policy makers to develop initiatives promoting transparency and considering the effects of behavioural biases in the digital environment, to ensure that consumers are able to make conscious choices and use products and services meaningfully.

Innovations in telecommunications markets have introduced new regulatory challenges related to consumer protection and empowerment. The use of profiling and behavioural targeting, which is increasing with new developments such as Artificial Intelligence and big data, can deepen market asymmetries, particularly those affecting vulnerable users. These developments increase the economic value of behavioural biases and emotions for some market players and demand regulatory approaches that go beyond traditional consumer protection frameworks.

We are glad to note that European proposals are responding to the needs of this evolving regulatory environment.

Finally, **the third topic — Inclusion, particularly related to the participation and empowerment of women and youth**.

I am deeply engaged in the ITU's Area of Action on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls through ICTs, advancing the vision of technology that empowers everyone, regardless of gender.

I have been honoured to participate in the Network of Women Session at WTSA-24 in India, the WSIS+20 High-Level Event in Geneva, and the Global Symposium for Regulators in Saudi Arabia.

In Portugal, I was recently designated as an Ambassador of the National Girls in STEM Program

Today, I am proud to lead a Portuguese delegation composed mostly of women, and including a young representative from the European Group at the Youth Celebration.

We are also proud to have nominated Mrs. Cristina Aguiar as Vice-Chairwoman candidate for ITU-D Study Group 1 for the next study period.

Excellencies,

Let us work together to ensure that digital progress is universal, meaningful, and sustainable — leaving no one behind.

Thank you for your attention.