

Remarks

Topic: World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 (WTDC-25)
under the theme “***Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity
for an inclusive and sustainable digital future***”

Location: Baku, Government of Azerbaijan
Session 4 of the **High-Level Segment**

Date: 18 November at 16:15 – 17:30

- *Mrs. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of the ITU*
- *Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau*
- *Chair of ITU WTDC-25*
- *Distinguished delegates*
- *Ladies and Gentlemen*

It gives me immense pleasure to address you at this World Telecommunication Development Conference *WTDC-25*, hosted here in the vibrant nation of Azerbaijan, under the profoundly important theme: “***Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future.***”

Let me first express my appreciation and sincere thanks to the International Telecommunication and the Government of Azerbaijan for hosting us in this beautiful city of Baku.

I bring you greetings from the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, a small island developing state (SIDS), whose very future hinges on the issues we will discuss here in Baku.

For nations like ours, digital connectivity has become the lifeblood of our economy, the resilience of our infrastructure, and the empowerment of our people.

As a small island developing state, the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis remains highly susceptible to adverse effects of climate change. Since 1950, numerous extreme weather events have undermined livelihood security and hindered development progress. Our Federation’s reliance on climate-sensitive sectors such as Tourism and agriculture, coupled with the exposure of low-lying coastal communities to storm surges and sea-level rise, puts livelihoods, socio-cultural practices, and critical ecosystems at serious risk.

Recognizing these challenges, the government has increased its commitment of transforming St. Kitts & Nevis into a sustainable, resilient island state capable of mitigating and adapting to these environmental shifts.

Our vision is to achieve **universal meaningful and affordable connectivity**, ensuring that access to digital technology translates into real-world opportunity for every citizen and every nation.

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) through the universal service fund has provided efficient, affordable and modern telecommunication services to schools, hospitals, community centers and support broadband access to persons that are differently abled and physically challenged.

Since the last WTDC, our country has made remarkable strides. Our citizens and businesses continue to benefit from high mobile penetration rate, increase internet access and presently, the local internet providers are expanding fibre-networks directly to homes, delivering IP TV and strengthening their ICT Infrastructure to be more resilient to ensure connectivity is maintained even during a disaster.

We have been implementing projects and activities to accelerate digital transformation through assessments of national digital infrastructure network resilience and preparedness; infrastructure mapping and cybersecurity.

Key Policy Focus Areas

1. **Digital Transformation and the Sustainable Island State:** Through our Sustainable Island State Agenda and Digital Transformation Agenda the Federation has created a roadmap for harnessing digital technologies to drive socio-economic development in a way that is sustainable and aligned with our Digital Transformation Agenda that is centered around people, process optimization and incorporating digital technologies.
2. **Universal and Meaningful Connectivity (UMC):** Beyond just providing basic internet access actions are being taken to provide high speed and reliable internet connection that is availability and affordable to our citizens. The provision of Laptops to every child and extending to teachers provides the essential devices to every household. A digital skills Academy will be established in 2026 that will be integrated within the public sector and through partnerships with private sector utilize expertise to delivery ongoing digital skills training to all. Our government has taken another step in its digital development with the implementation of cybersecurity training initiative- Cyber Nations Program 2025 designed to equip citizens of the critical digital security skills.
3. **Enabling Environment:** With the support of the NTRC, ECTEL, CTU and ITU we have been promoting an enabling policy and regulatory environment and will encourage increased investment in resilient infrastructure (like fiber-optic, satellite, and 5G networks), fosters innovation, and strengthens local Internet stability and resilience.
4. **Inclusivity and Security:** Policies supporting **digital inclusion** for marginalized communities, and measures to enhance **cybersecurity** and **child**

online protection are currently ongoing for further advancement of these initiatives.

Establishing the Digital Foundation: Connectivity and Infrastructure

For nations like ours, **digital connectivity is not a luxury; it is the lifeblood of our economy, the resilience of our infrastructure, and the empowerment of our people.** Connectivity is the lifeblood of the 21st-century economy. Our primary policy thrust is to solidify the Federation's role as a **digital bridge** connecting all citizens across the Federation.

Through the technical support of Packet Clearing House (PCH), the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis made a significant step toward digital sovereignty and infrastructure resilience on 13th May as The Cable, City Wi-Fi, and the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize their partnership as the founding members of the National Internet Exchange Point (IX).

St. Kitts and Nevis now possesses one of the more technically sound IXPs in the Caribbean and emphasized that it is a legacy that should be protected and built upon. This reaffirmed the Government's commitment to building a strong digital economy, emphasizing that the IX is a critical national asset and a cornerstone of the Federation's digital future.

The Government wide area network has been enhanced through our Digital Service Network (DSN) project is rapidly expanding broadband, ensuring high-speed access across all government ministries and departments to support the secure delivery of digital services. We are committed to achieving a comprehensive, secure and resilient network plans are on the way to create a new national data Centre that will also leverage cloud computing technologies for increased availability and to support rapid software development and business continuity.

Digital Public Infrastructure and Citizen Empowerment

Infrastructure alone is not enough. We must ensure digital services are **trusted, accessible, and inclusive.** The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis is implementing our Whole of Government **Digital Transformation Strategy**, which includes rolling out a new, secure **Digital ID system** in 2026. This system will provide a secure and simplify verification and authentication digital trust framework to confirm and verify identity to facilitate electronic transactions streamline access to both public and private sector services. Ongoing digitalization of government services while utilizing emerging technologies. We are embedding **privacy and cybersecurity** at the core of these platforms, to maintain the public's trust and confidence as we accelerate digital transformation.

Sustainability, Trust and Cybersecurity

Finally, no digital future is possible without **trust and sustainability**.

With regards to **cybersecurity**, we look forward to continuing partnership with the ITU to develop our National Cybersecurity Strategy and Implementation Plan as we endeavor to significantly strengthen our national architecture, enhance network resilience, and improving our incident-response capacity. Building a robust, secure digital environment is vital for attracting responsible investment and protecting our digital markets.

In alignment with our national climate goals, we will be championing Green Digital Growth. We are integrating renewable energy sources such as solar and geothermal energy into our entire ICT backbone, with the establishment of a new data center to support our digital operations. This is more than environmental responsibility; it is an economic strategy, ensuring our digital growth is **energy-efficient and sustainable** for future generations.

Through our partnership with regional organizations such as the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), ECTEL and International Telecommunications Union (ITU), we are advancing the implementation of NETP to support emergency telecommunications, capacity building, inclusion and accessibility. With the commencement of the Cell Broadcast Project as part of the United Nations' Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative, this will strengthen our efforts to implement and implement cell broadcast technology as a critical, life-saving method for disseminating emergency alerts via mobile networks.

Conclusion

The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis is ready to move from simply closing the digital divide to and advancing the digital transformation agenda, to be globally connected, innovative for a sustainable digital future.

Our presence here at the WTDC-25 is a testament to our commitment to facilitating this critical international dialogue. I look forward to working with all of you to forge the partnerships and adopt the policies that will ensure the transformative power of ICT benefits every single person on our planet.

Let me now wish you productive discussions during this WTDC in 2025 which I am optimistic will be productive and a resounding success.

Thank you.