

Statement header:

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Dušan MATULAY

- b) the speaker's full title;

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations in Geneva

- c) the name of the Member State of the speaker;

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

- d) the session of the High-Level Segment at which the statement will be delivered;

Session 4: Tuesday 18 November, 16:15-17:30

- e) the original language of the statement;

ENGLISH

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Note :

The presented version of the statement is intended for publication on the conference website.

The final oral version presented in the plenary will be shortened to the required 3 minutes.

Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to address on behalf of Slovakia the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 here in Baku, convened under the theme “Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future.”

At the outset, I would like to thank the organizers for the excellent hospitality and conditions they created for the conference as well as the ITU-D team for the rich program.

We agree wholeheartedly that connectivity is not just about networks and their infrastructure — it is about the human potential that those networks unlock. As the ITU reminds us, billions remain unconnected, excluded from the digital economy and the opportunities it brings.

For Slovakia, bridging this digital divide is central to our vision of a just and inclusive future. To achieve it, we stand here as a partner not a patronizing wise guy, as an honest broker, not a lecturer.

Slovakia is a small, landlocked country. Despite the successful economic transition after the fall of the dysfunctional communist regime in the late 80s, we face today the mid income trap which we can overcome only with innovation, digitalization and cooperation.

We believe that:

Connectivity must be universal — accessible to all, from cities to the most remote rural areas.

Connectivity must be meaningful — providing not only access, but relevant services, skills, and content.

Connectivity must be affordable — ensuring that cost never stands between a person and opportunity.

Allow me to highlight three areas that Slovakia brings to the WTDC 2025 discussions, reflecting both our national experience and our global commitments.

1) Developing resilient digital infrastructure

Slovakia continues to invest in fibre-optic networks, mobile broadband expansion, and innovative partnerships with the private sector. We also recognise the need for resilient and sustainable systems that can adapt to future technologies. We therefore support international efforts to extend broadband to underserved regions and to promote innovation through technology transfer and public-private cooperation.

2) Enabling effective regulatory and policy frameworks

A sound regulatory environment is essential to ensure fair competition, interoperability, and trust. Slovakia supports policies that strengthen cybersecurity, protect data, and ensure transparency in spectrum management and governance.

Connectivity must be both empowering and safe for all users.

3) Building digital skills and inclusion

Infrastructure alone does not guarantee transformation. People do. Slovakia attaches high importance to digital literacy, the inclusion of women and youth, and the integration of ICT in education, healthcare, and rural development.

We are especially committed to ensuring that no one—whether in a remote village, a marginalised community, or a landlocked region—is left behind.

Distinguished delegates,

Slovakia is ready not only to share ideas, but also to share resources. Our diplomacy and private sector is ready for the cooperation. We feel particularly strong in areas such as meteorology, cybersecurity and e-government.

Through our development assistance program SlovakAid and partners from the private sector, we are prepared to support partner countries in implementing digital transformation projects, particularly in:

- Digital education and e-learning, including teacher training and curriculum development;
- Public administration digitalisation, drawing on Slovakia's experience in e-government and open data;
- Building digital skills for women, youth, and entrepreneurs, especially in least-developed and landlocked developing countries;
- Strengthening cybersecurity capacity to ensure that connectivity is secure and trusted.

We invite interested partners, regional organisations, and ITU bodies to work with us in developing joint pilot projects under the framework of WTDC 2025 outcomes and the next ITU Development Action Plan.

This is Slovakia's way of translating commitment into tangible action—because we believe solidarity and partnership are the true enablers of global connectivity.

As we gather here in Baku, Slovakia reaffirms its strong support for the ITU and for multilateral cooperation. We will continue to engage actively in the upcoming Global Connectivity Roadmap 2026–2029, ensuring that it reflects the priorities of inclusiveness, sustainability, and innovation. We fully support the central and irreplaceable role of the ITU, which has the expertise, experience and excellent leadership.

After all – it is the oldest IO in the world! Happy 160th birthday!

We also stress the importance of regional initiatives, resource mobilisation, and engagement with the private sector, academia, and civil society. It is great that these stakeholders are here at WTDC. Together, these actors make digital transformation a shared global enterprise.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Technology can be a destructive power as it can be a driver of progress. If the future is to be determined by our political choices, I would like to put humanity at the very centre of the digital transformation – after all, the digital revolution is here thanks to human progress and it should be addressed solely for the benefit of humanity.

Consequently, digital transformation with human face needs to become a decisive philosophical orientation of the 21st century. It emphasizes the value of human beings, individually and collectively. It means that human beings remain the central focus in the digital transformation, while digitisation should be approached in its entirety and complexity for the improvement of people's lives and the preservation of our planet. It seeks to enable people to achieve things they never believed possible, empowered by the use of technologies while respecting the law, ethics, fundamental freedoms, democratic principles and human rights.

The Slovak Republic stands ready to work with all of you, to contribute our knowledge, our partnerships, and our assistance to ensure that digital transformation truly leaves no one behind.

Thank you.