

**High-Level Plenary Statement WTDC-25 – Minister of Information, Communications,
Science, Technology and Innovation, Lesotho**

Honourable Minister Nthati Moorosi

**Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Lesotho is honoured to participate in this pivotal WTDC-25 under the theme *“Universal, Meaningful, and Affordable Connectivity for an Inclusive and Sustainable Digital Future.”* This theme resonates deeply with our national commitment to ensuring that every Basotho—regardless of geography, income, or background—benefits from the promise of digital transformation.

Over the past two years, we have taken decisive steps to expand connectivity and strengthen our digital foundations. Through the implementation of our National Digital Transformation Strategy, we have achieved significant milestones. One of our flagship initiatives is the Schools Connectivity Programme, aligned with the ITU-UNICEF Giga Initiative. Today, over 1,800 have been fully mapped and 245 connected to the internet, enabling digital learning, digital skills development, and inclusion for our young people.

Additionally, we have advanced the rollout of Digital Public Infrastructure to support meaningful digital services. Lesotho is currently piloting MOSIP-based digital identity, complete with digital wallet and authentication, while building a national eServices platform incorporating document management, interoperability, and trusted services. These investments aim to reduce transaction costs, increase transparency, and expand access to essential government services—especially for women, rural communities, and micro-entrepreneurs.

In line with affordability goals, our Regulator has modernized licensing frameworks to welcome non-terrestrial networks, including Low Earth Orbit satellite operators. This will significantly lower connectivity costs for remote highland communities and accelerate universal access.

Excellencies,

We recognise that meaningful connectivity also requires digital skills, affordability, and community empowerment. To this end, Lesotho has established the Community Digital Inclusion Model, originally launched with UNDP and now fully managed through our Universal Service Fund.

Through this model, village digital ambassadors are deployed across rural communities to train citizens in essential digital skills—ranging from accessing eServices and digital payments to online safety, entrepreneurship, and productivity tools. This initiative has become a powerful engine for local empowerment and digital inclusion.

Furthermore, the Government—again through the Universal Service Fund—is rolling out community digital centres across the country. These centres provide free access to the internet, public devices, and basic technical support, directly addressing affordability barriers related to data and devices. For many Basotho, these centres are the first tangible gateway to meaningful digital participation.

Excellencies,

As we look forward, we believe the work of ITU-D remains central in supporting countries like Lesotho to build robust, secure, and people-centred digital ecosystems. We therefore offer three recommendations for future ITU-D work:

First, deepen support for common Digital Public Infrastructure and interoperability frameworks, helping Member States adopt scalable, open, and secure digital systems that reduce duplication and costs.

Second, expand capacity-building programmes in advanced digital skills—including open-source adoption, AI, cybersecurity, and data governance—to empower youth and strengthen national digital economies.

Third, accelerate innovative financing mechanisms for universal connectivity, leveraging public–private partnerships and risk-sharing facilities that can bring last-mile connectivity within reach for least developed countries.

Chairperson,

Lesotho believes that meaningful connectivity is more than access—it is the pathway to economic opportunity, efficient public services, resilient societies, and a sustainable future. With the support of the ITU and our global partners, we remain committed to building a digital future that leaves no one behind.

I thank you.