

**To the Participants of the
International Telecommunication Union's (ITU)
World Telecommunication Development Conference**

*Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,
It is my honour to address you at the opening of the ITU World Telecommunication
Development Conference here, in Baku.
I have the privilege of conveying to you the greetings of the President of the Republic
of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr Ilham Aliyev, and his sincere wishes for a successful and
fruitful Conference.
I now have the honour to read the message from the President.*

Dear event participants,

I extend my warmest greetings to you at the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) World Telecommunication Development Conference in Baku.

The holding of this prestigious international forum in the field of telecommunications - the World Telecommunication Development Conference - in Azerbaijan for the first time in the South Caucasus and Central Asia is a notable milestone. This reflects the traditions of longstanding and productive cooperation between Azerbaijan and the International Telecommunication Union, and also clearly demonstrates our country's leading position on the global stage in the field of digital development.

The purpose of this conference, which brings together regulatory bodies, international organizations, and all stakeholders active in the field of telecommunications and information technologies, is to enhance strategies and regulatory frameworks, facilitate discussions on promoting inclusive and sustainable digital transformation, and expand digital accessibility.

The world has already entered a new digital era. Today, technological development and digitalization have become among the key factors that determine a country's level of development and shape the future of humanity. Regrettably, in an era when the digital world has advanced so significantly, more than two billion people still lack access to the Internet. In today's world, no country or individual should be left out of the digital future. Ensuring this remains our shared responsibility.

The field of communication technologies has become a leading force in Azerbaijan's non-oil economy, maintaining a steady growth rate over the past four years. All of this has been supported by consistent efforts in developing artificial intelligence, preventing cyberattacks, and expanding digital infrastructure.

The information security and cybersecurity strategy serves as the cornerstone of Azerbaijan's national security architecture. Furthermore, in accordance with the document "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development," the development of the digital economy has been identified as one of our country's key strategic directions. In this regard, we place special emphasis on cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Today, Azerbaijan holds a leading position in the region with 100 percent broadband Internet coverage. Our country is also among the frontrunners in the field of digital identity. The biometric digital signature system, known as “SiMA,” has already been adopted by 3.6 million users and integrated into over 80 government information systems. It is not by chance that Azerbaijan has been included in the highest category of the UN’s “E-Government Development Index.” Our goal is to be ranked among the top 40 countries in this index within the next five years.

Baku, which is hosting the World Telecommunication Development Conference, is today not only a global telecommunications hub but also a center for international cooperation in the digital sphere. Within the framework of the conference, the opening of the ITU Regional Acceleration Centre in Baku is also scheduled. As part of the ITU’s global innovation network this Centre will serve as a leading platform for innovation and entrepreneurship in the region.

I am confident that the discussions held, decisions made, and partnerships forged during the conference will help build an inclusive, secure, and sustainable digital future, while having a tangible impact on the lives of billions of people.

Once again, I extend my warmest wishes to you and wish you productive discussions and every success in the proceedings of this event.

Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan