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MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE

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>> SECRETARIAT: Welcome to the session panelists.   If the panelists would please turn on your cameras, I would like to check your video and your audio, please.

Good afternoon, Excellencies.   We are about to start the ministerial Round Table.   We apologize it is not a Round Table because we have a lot of Ministers joining us mobily.   So we will start in two minutes.   Please settle down.

(Pause).

>> SECRETARIAT: Good afternoon, Excellencies.   We hope that you had an enjoyable lunch and a little bit of rest.   We do hope that you are enjoying the WSIS Forum 2022.   Please note that this ministerial at your request is closed for Ministers and deputies.   So you could have one person assisting you, if you wish.   But we would like to request the others to please understand because this ministerial is for Ministers and deputies at their request.   We have been doing this traditionally for several years.   We do hope that you will understand.   Thank you so much.   We would like to invite Mr. Secretary-General, Mr. Houlin Zhao to please welcome all the Ministers

and Excellencies present in this room today.   Mr. Houlin Zhao.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you very much.   Dear friends, Excellencies, Ministers, Vice-Ministers and dear participants, I'm very pleased that you joined us at this ministerial Round Table.   First let me just thank our host of lunch, governor of Saudi to invite us for lunch and we did have an enjoyable lunch.   But under the pressure reminder from organizers that we have to rush.   We have to finish our lunch very quick and not to keep our remote participants waiting to see meeting started late.   That's very good to see you all here.

As we discussed that the Ministers' Round Table meeting is important for us to understand what is your opinions, what is your ideas, what are your observations, your proposals.   We noted that over the last two decades ICT had developed very well.   And I think this is an opportunity for me to on behalf of ITU to express our sincere appreciation for all efforts that you made and your team made to improve the ICT development in your country, in your region so that will come to us and we are much, much -- we are prepared for this unexpected situation.

And we are very much, you know, managed our life in very efficient way with ICT tools.   But however today we are still facing challenges, because we still have almost three billion people not connected online yet.   And we note that the digital divide is still a reality everywhere.   And after this pandemic, you want to get more investment in ICT.   In the past we try to encourage you to create a good environment, to attract investment.   But notice, this pandemic everyone look for investment.   Here are some situation like to have investment, education and have investment.   We may not be able to get good taxing of Government to improve our ICT environment.   So how can we do it?   This is something I already discussed with Ministers through other channels, like G20.   Like, you know, General Assembly and some others.   That we would like to invite our ministries, our Government to have smart strategy to develop ICT instead of giving each ministry their project to improve their system by ICT, can we do something collectively at the national level.   So these kind of things are quite important.   Also these two days I received some Ministers that I never met before and I saw a great opportunity for me to understand their expectations.   For example, this morning I received a Minister from Kazakhstan and he suggested to have international standard to allow Government to have a very legal document by their citizens that today seems to be motivated.   This is something that I think that I just suggest we do.   Glad to see -- I don't know whether the Minister already had a chance to talk to him or not.

But this is important and maybe also for you to understand that this is some opportunities we can share experiences, share ideas, but if ITU should do something, let us know and we will try our best to do that.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to our Chairman.   He is a victim because after several

rounds of consultation we try to find a Chairman to help us take care of this important activities during this WSIS.   And he was very kind to accept this invitation just two weeks before and then have to prepare everything.   But he not expected that WSIS engagement at this moment is terribly heavy.   But you managed very well.   We thank you very much for your kindness and for your strong leadership.

So Ladies and Gentlemen, I think this is something -- I tried to just highlight my focus.   I myself put the four Is on my agenda.   Infrastructure, investment, innovation and inclusiveness.   Infrastructure, we have to understand our infrastructure to those connecting it.   3 billion.   To increase efficiency of our infrastructure with new technologies, like 4G, 5G, Internet of Things.   We need to get investment.   Investment opportunity -- this moment is an invested by private sector.   How can we attract the private sector to stay with us, how can we encourage them to invest more.   I think that our government, our Ministers has high responsibility to collect the environment. Innovation is not only for new technologies but innovation for new smart policies.   And inclusiveness, of course, inclusiveness is not to leave anybody behind.   So that's my opening remarks.   And I hope you will take this opportunity to, you know, to share with you among yourselves the practice you enjoyed.   And the programs that you discovered and expectation that you wish to take.   And then you -- ITU and other like my brother from UNESCO, could follow your advice to make the world much better, ICT empowerment.

So that's all.   I thank you Mr. Mario Maniewicz, you are kind to stay with me all the time.   They have other engagements but as soon as we can see it is now this time of year, thank you very much.

Okay.   That's all what I would like to say at this moment.   Chairman, let me just pass the floor to you.   And if you allow me I might have to leave quickly.   Yeah.   Please.

          >> CHAIR: The Secretary-General of ITU, Mr. Houlin Zhao, heads of United Nations agencies, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, good afternoon to all of you.   And peace be upon you all.

Firstly, I begin by welcoming all of you to the ministerial Round Table today.   The 1st of June 2020 here in ITU headquarters in Geneva.   And I hope we will have a very fruitful and beneficial discussion.   As it was earlier announced, that this discussion is only for Ministers and Deputy Ministers. The Forum allows us to compare notes as we all know there is not monopoly of wisdom and knowledge.   The more we interact the more we share ideas, the more we become better people and the more we discuss our responsibilities effectively.   It is because of this that these are ministerial Round Table is going to be beneficial to all of us.   And I do hope that we will focus more on these four Is as coined by the SG, that's infrastructure, investment, innovation, and inclusiveness.

And they are key to the global development of Digital Economy and ICT. It is because of this that I wish us a very deliberate, very effective discussion.

And I do hope that we will be -- feel free to share what we have learned with our colleagues.

And after the event, each country will look at what it needs to do in order to continue to develop the ICT.

Furthermore, we are to use the opportunity for more coordination, partnership and collaboration. As I have been saying that ICT cannot be developed in silos. The more we support one another, the more we have a win-win situation. And it is part of the benefits of this gathering we will be able to identify many friends. So ICT Ministers, some in Africa some in Asia, Europe, I have never met them before. But during this WSIS I have the privilege of meeting them. So it is an avenue that we get more partners and that people that we collaborate together.

And finally, I do hope that in this discussion so far WSIS 2022 has been very effective to all of us, particularly now we can consider it to be post-COVID-19 because you can see without any face mask and the restriction has been very limited. I congratulate all of you. And for those here with us and online virtually I hope we have a very successful deliberation. Once again thank you all for being here.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Allow me to, let me add one point. This is called ministerial Round Table. And in ITU, in our family we consider all the agencies at the Minister level. We have to distinguished heads of agencies here from our Member States. They also join this group.

>> CHAIR: So for clarification, which I earlier observed to her, that there are some -- they are heads of relevant Government institutions. So they are expected to stay behind. And participate in the deliberation and they are part of the ministerial Round Table. Thank you very much.

I invite Guinea.

>> Just to let everyone know we have interpretation in French. So if we are aware that there are quite a few French speaking Ministers.

>> CHAIR: We have interpretation in both French and English. (Off microphone).

>> Microphone, please, Mr. Chairman.

>> CHAIR: (Off microphone).

>> The interpreters cannot hear the Chairman whose microphone is not on.

>> CHAIR: (Off microphone). United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Mr. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar for his intervention. You are invited, please.

>> MAJED SULTAN AL MESMAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I congratulate you on your Chairmanship.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

>> MAJED SULTAN AL MESMAR: As you know the united Arab Emirates has been supportive of the WSIS agenda since its inception. And work towards achieving the goals as per the WSIS Action Lines. And we are committed to continuing to do so. In terms of ICT infrastructure in the UAE,

when it comes to mobile coverage, whether from 2G to 4G, we have got 99% coverage everywhere in inhabited areas, even in remote areas.   Fiber to the home, the UAE is considered the first worldwide when it comes to fiber in the home for the fourth year consecutively.

E-learning we started this program 2012.   And it was the saver during the pandemic.   It was so easy for us to shift one million students to continue their studies from home.

In terms of national wide transformation, we started the electronic Government 1998.   By 2013 we started the mobile Government where all services can be done through Smartphones.   2015, we have achieved 96.3% transformation of the services.   We are on the third case of our digital transformation strategy, namely truly digital.   Focusing on human centric proactive services.

Since then we have launched various shared enablers such as the federal network where all federal and local Governments, entities then connected. We have got the UAE pass, that's the first national digital identity.   Digital voice, all official documents and allowing for sharing based on customer consent.   Of course, the Government service bus that allows the G2G sharing of data and more.

At the international level, some of the initiatives that the UAE has taken, the UAE prior -- organization in 2020 have committed to financially support the so-called GIGI UNICEF ITU initiative that aims to connect every school in the world to the Internet.

The UAE also has launched in 2021 what we call federal virtual academy as a platform for building capabilities and upscaling capabilities of whoever can join.   And it is open for all.

It provides various training programs that is essential to the digital age. So far 50 countries have benefitted since 2021.

But the real challenges that the world from our point of view the world should be concerned about, how to achieve harmonized progress across all WSIS action items, especially for those countries which have -- which have less resources.   How do we support countries which are less fortunate in terms of resources.   Those countries they face lots of difficulties in fulfilling the WSIS goals.   Maybe some sort of actions, targets need to be put how the other countries who are developed, they -- we have to come up with a strategy, how we can really help those Least Developed Countries.   And get them connected to the Internet in order to be part of the Digital Economy.

Because they are out until now.

And that's over a third of the world's population.   With that, I conclude, Mr. Chairman.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us.   However, one of our stakeholders here will be invited to make his contribution due to other engagements immediately after now.   That's the -- which is a co-organizer of WSIS Forum.   That is the assistant Director-General of

UNESCO, His Excellency Tawfik Jelassi.

>> TAWFIK JELASSI: Thank you. Secretary-General Houlin Zhao, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, and participants in this WSIS ministerial round table. I'm especially pleased to address you this afternoon. As a former Minister of ICT education and research I'm fully aware of the heavy responsibilities that you all have, of the challenges that you are facing and the opportunities that you encounter. Over the years through the leadership of Secretary-General Houlin Zhao the WSIS Forum has built trust and commitments around communication information in order to leverage ICT capabilities, create value and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite many challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic the WSIS Forum has recently achieved record growth from 2020 to 2021. The number of online participants increased from 15,000 to more than 50,000 participants last year. This year with the return of in-person participation, we have more than 600 registered in-person participants at this event, including more than 55 ICT Ministers coming from all over the world.

This is very important to have Ministers, to have the Deputy Ministers, to have the regulators and to have other key stakeholders involved in shaping up and boosting the role of ICT in our respective countries, but also the type of contribution we expect technology to make and the type of value add.

ITU and UNESCO have benefitted from close in our joint work, bridging connectivity issues to digital skills, digital competencies, quality content and, of course, the universal access to information.

These synergy demonstrate that investing in digital competencies is equally important as investing in connectivity to innovation. I quote the Secretary-General's four Is which he mentioned in his opening remarks. We need to increase our efforts and harness its potential to contribute to a truly effective digital transformation which is impacting all business sectors, all industries but also the way public sector and Governments operate and the type of services that you offer to our citizens.

But, of course, we need to mitigate the risks involved and the harmful side of digital technology including online misinformation, misinformation, Fake News, hate speech online, online harassment of scientists, of journalists, of educators, of artists. We have to tackle these issues and we have to ensure that the Internet remains open, accessible and remains, of course, respectful of Human Rights. And guarantees a multi-stakeholder participation.

Meaningful universal connectivity and the digital divide also require that Internet users engage online in the language of their choice, including their mother tongue. ITU and UNESCO have launched this year a new WSIS special track on indigenous cultures and language. I need to open a high level dialogue on ICT and indigenous languages which is key for UNESCO, organizing the international decade of indigenous languages which will run from 2022 to 2032. I take this opportunity to thank you all, distinguished participants, for your participation, for your commitment, for your

engagement and hopefully together we can bring the good side of technology and make it beneficial to all in society.   Have a fruitful session.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you for your intervention.   We wish you a safety journey.   Furthermore, we move to the next partner that is our gold plus partner, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, being represented by His Excellency, Dr. Mohammed Saud Al Tamimi, the governor of commissions and information technology commission of Saudi Arabia.   Your Excellency, you may wish to proceed.   Thank you.

>> MOHAMMED SAUD AL TAMIMI: Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to be with you today in this physical meeting after we get through -- two years of virtual meeting over the past.   So it is my absolute pleasure to be with you in this ministerial Round Table.   And I will keep the promise of his Secretary-General, Houlin Zhao, by keeping my talk very short.   I would like to extend my gratitude to all the making WSIS Forum an important event.   For the hard work, including the ITU staff.   From the theme of WSIS Forum 2020, we have this inclusion and I will highlight two points that we are doing right now in Saudi Arabia about inclusion and it makes a difference and I will share with you some of the numbers.   When it comes to women empowerment we start with a low base.   Five years women working with the ICT sector represent 7% only.   Now we are 29%.   We are passing the G20 and EU average.   And it makes a difference.

In order to enabling wholesale society and change in the SDGs, CITC which is a telecom regulator developed sustainability report and we would like to thank the ITU team to support us and endorsing that report.   We highlight multiple case study, 14 case studies in Saudi Arabia where we emphasize the effect and role, recycling the waste of electrical and electronic objects, including utilizing the renewable energy within the sector.   Nobody doubts that Digital Economy now rising and cornerstone of that one is the ICT sector. If you are not watching careful, green energy and renewable resources to supply this infrastructure there will be challenges ahead.

So again I will keep my talk short.   Many thanks to the organizers of WSIS and also I want to reiterate that the kingdom is already committed to build bridges for international cooperation and enhance coordinations as we together implement the WSIS outcome to advance 2020 -- 2030 Agenda of sustainable development.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you for your intervention.   Allow me to please invite our gold partner, that is the Qatar to be represented by Ms. Mashael Ali Yousef Al Hammadi, acting assistant undersecretary of government information technology affairs, Ministry of ICT.   You are invited, please.

>> MASHAEL ALI YOUSEF AL HAMMADI: Thank you.   Your Excellencies, Secretary-General, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to express my attitude for the great efforts for parties organizing the WSIS Forum 2022 and bringing us together in the Round Table for which the state of Qatar is proud to be a gold partner.   Of the national regional and international

levels, the state of Qatar is of great importance to UN SDGs and Action Lines. As of that Qatar 2030 digital Government vision are aligned with the UN SDGs and Action Lines.   Qatar is also developing a new digital synergy for more resilience safe and smart nation.

Also considered the UN SDGs and action lines alignment to ensure we are working on the same as the other nations.   And the international community.

We believe that in international Forums should continue to highlight the importance of UN SDGs as the -- as this ensures we are all moving in the same directions together with ICTs.   The 11 policies solutions and services are adopted across all sectors.   Ush Excellencies, we believe that the -- we believe that the impact of WSIS Forum is beneficial for all of us.   First of all we have had a great deal to learn from other countries and participants.   Secondly, the constant alignment with the UN 2030 SDG is necessary to ensure we are constantly combine our efforts focusing on specific goals and reaching them collectively.   Lastly, being a Forum that hosts Governments as well as NGOs and private institutions, WSIS is well positioned to provide the recommendations that tackle our issues from multi-channel which is a collective approach that includes the private sector, public sector as well as academia.   Your Excellencies, general secretary, your Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for listening and hosting us in this Round Table.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much all for your interventions.   Once again, on behalf of the institutions involved, I want to re-emphasize our appreciation to our three partners, united Arab Emirates, kingdom of Saudi Arabia and also Qatar.   We are most appreciative.   Thank you very much. Before we proceed with the ministerial Round Table discussion, allow me to remind about time constraints.   Looking at the total number of Ministers that we have that are willing to speak either online or physically, there is need for us to limit our intervention to three minutes.   It is very important.   So that we will be able to allow each and every ones of us to speak here. Furthermore, on this screen there are three guiding questions, which we feel these are very important to guide also on the question to ask and also the limit of what to ask.   And how to focus the question.   So No. 1, WSIS has been almost 20 years now, starting from 2003 in Geneva.   With this we need to identify what are the achievements and challenges so far.

And No. 2 also to consider our national approaches to ICT.   And No. 3, also as we all know that WSIS is one of the unique United Nations Summits that have -- has returned the commitment and dedication of all involved stakeholders.   So we need to look at the outcome and also how to encourage more stakeholder engagement.   So these are the three guiding questions and I do hope that we will do the best we can to respect them in the course of our contribution and intervention.

I will follow the list alphabetically, except where necessary.   So it is an alphabetical approach to the list.   Based on the list available to me, there is no A.   So permit me to go to B.

So B we have Bangladesh and Bahrain.   Yes.   So B, so Bahrain comes first.   You may wish to -- so allow me to invite His Excellency, the Minister of transportations and telecommunications, His Excellency engineer.   You are invited.

>> BAHRAIN: Thank you.   Your Excellencies, masters and heads of delegation.   It is a pleasure to participate today in this ministerial Round Table as part of the WSIS Forum which has provided an excellent framework for implementation of WSIS Action Lines towards advancing the achievement of SDGs.   The theme of ICT all for inclusion, resilience happen to be especially important to us in the kingdom of Bahrain.   And the essence of policy making in our ICT sector.

As we approach 20 years from liberalization of the telecommunication market in Bahrain we are happy to say that this regulatory reform in the sector has enabled the kingdom consumers to benefit from all leading communication services, and strong competitions.   Where national broadband network extends 200% of all businesses and almost 85% of all households during the past decade, fixed wired broadband prices have decreased by 81%.   Mobile broadband has also decreased 42% since 2011 as we enjoy one of the highest mobile penetration rates worldwide.

Now our latest national telecommunications plan the Government restated its firm, believes that consumers must be at the heart of the policy for the sector.   The consumer is able to rely on sustainable and competitive markets, delivering high quality data connectivity at reasonable price while being protected from cyber threats.

Consistent with this year WSIS Forum them the national telecom plan required that consumers should be able to take informed decisions in relation to offered services while making sure that consumer groups with special requirements are supported and have access in use of telecommunication services.   As part of the strategic goals identified in the national plan, the government aims to ensure that the consumer truly benefits from the digital infrastructure deplored in the kingdom.   So this end the government in Bahrain has prioritized readiness of both fixed and mobile communication infrastructure.   This has attracted investment in the section of more than two billion U.S. dollars since 2010 with approximately 831 million dollars in the past five years.

In terms of 5G we are one of the first countries worldwide to achieve 100% nationwide rollouts by two operators in early 2021.   While the third operator follows closely.

We are conscious that consumer benefits from such infrastructure.   Will require that we go beyond networks.   We were working with all national stakeholder to ensure wide scale deployment of IoT and AI across various economic sectors.

Today almost all our Government services are being performed and provided electronically.   We also hope to attract ICT leaders to utilize the

available technologies in Bahrain to test our infrastructure, the 5G use cases and export innovation to the world from our country.   While we continue to learn and develop I would like to confirm that our willingness to cooperate with all and support Developing Countries with the aim of bridging the digital maturity gaps between the different ITU members.   So once again thank you for listening.   And I wish you a productive Forum.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts and your progress so far with all of us.   In order to save time I will not unnecessarily intervene except where necessary.   We will move to Bangladesh, another B.   However this time around I will invite the Minister of land, not the Minister of ICT, to speak.   They are among the winners of 2023 WSIS.   There is the form of overlapping between ICT, broadband penetration and land.   Land must play a significant role when it comes to ICT penetration or broadband penetration as the case may be.   Some lands are more valuable than others.   The land where it is valuable you will discover that there is high population.   And ICT penetration and investment there could be profitable.   Land that is empty or not habitable you will discover that investment there is not profitable.

So there is a form of issue of right-of-way charges also.   So there are areas where land has a role to play when it comes to ICT deployment, broadband penetration and many more.   Permit me to please invite His Excellency, the Minister of land of Bangladesh to speak.   You are invited.

>> BANGLADESH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.   Excellencies, distinguished participants, members of the media, very good afternoon it is an honor and privilege to say a few words in this ministerial meeting.   As mentioned by the Secretary-General a while ago the four Is, as a land ministry I guess, you know, this infrastructure thing goes quite well on this category.   I would like to thank WSIS for arranging such a nice event, especially yesterday's one.   And as a winner I must say we are really thrilled.   It was quite a challenge when we take the initiative online process.   But I guess it really paid off.   I mean what you see about Bangladesh, it is a completely almost digital Bangladesh.

When our Prime Minister came to power she -- in 2009, she during her campaign she had campaigned with one slogan, if she comes to power, Bangladesh will be a digital Bangladesh.   And this is no longer a fairy tale story.   This is a reality.

You know, ever since .com boom I think while its heavily dependent on digital world, this is a digital world now.   I don't think that we will ever go back to the old system, manual system.   It is done and gone forever.   This is the present and this is the future.

I don't think so, there is anything in between.   So I mean this is obviously, you know, a great moment for us.   And especially when the pandemic hit worldwide, we thought that life is gone forever.   But I think we lost our loved ones, but we have been fortunate that, you know, who are still alive.   And this pandemic has really changed the entire democracy of Bangladesh -- I'm sorry,

the entire democracy of the world I would say.

And I guess we learned so many things during this pandemic. And I'm sure this experience will really take us, I mean in a better future. That world is expecting. Especially the new generation that they are hoping to have a sound and peaceful world. Anyway, coming back to my thing, as you know we won the category of land text development. We have been able to register over 38 million people in the last couple of years. And I'm pleased to say that over 2 million -- 20 million people are active users. So this is a remarkable achievement I would say. Especially countries like Bangladesh. Access to IT, access to technology was really difficult, especially in the remote areas. But our broadband and this I think has really give us a tremendous revolution I would say.

And if you look at the broadband penetration, the, you know, the cell phone penetration, I think we are in on a very, very high volume I would say. Anyway, I like to since I -- there is a time constraint, I would not like to drag on with my speech. I would like to thank the Chairman and Secretary-General for giving us this opportunity for this event.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. Glad to hear more insights about the development and progress made. No C here. Only one D. So we move to Djibouti. I will invite His Excellency, the Minister of communications, coastal services and telecommunications to speak. He is not here with us.

So we skip that one. Do we have E here with us? Ethiopia? We have Burundi. Apologies for skipping you. We move to His Excellency, the Minister in charge of ICT of Burundi. You are invited, Your Excellency.

>> BURUNDI: Thank you very much. I shall be speaking French. I am Vice-Minister. I'm not the Minister but I'm Vice-Minister. I represent the ministry in charge of ICTs in Burundi. To materialize the vision of WSIS, which was presented to us Burundi revised a development plan, general development plan for the period of 2018-2020 whose objective as to transform the economy of Burundi to create the decent jobs for everyone and improve social well-being for all, highlighting more specifically the promotion of ICTs, for it to be at the service of growth and social development.

In this context and the implementation of the national policy meant to develop ICT, Burundi rolled out a certain number of projects over the entire country, development of infrastructure, fiber optic rollout over the entire national territory both in rural as well as urban areas. Burundi is one of the African countries that has a fiber optic backbone that covers the entire territory, all Provinces. Now the extension is not necessarily effective and does not necessarily connect all remote areas for now. There is a mobile coverage that covers more than 95% of the population at this stage. We do have a challenge with regard to Internet penetration which remains at 13%. That's a challenge we need to meet by 2025 with projects subsidized by a fund that shall start by the end of the year. The Internet exchange in Burundi is a reality. With environment for operators, Governments, very much committed

both towards the private and public sector to increase transparency, traceability, time savings, connectivity by placing the sector amongst the priority sectors for the entire state.

The implementation of digitalization policy of the Government ministerial Council is taking place without any papers.   It is called the e-Council.   We are improving the legal and regulatory framework of the digital world with the development of new regulatory framework to promote investments. COVID-19 revealed how useful ICTs were even more than we had expected to keep public services alive during the pandemic.   Burundi Government rolled out a project to guarantee the interconnection between public services, health care services and most Governmental services were connected.

The policy to develop ICTs is focused more specifically on the youth and women to avoid any gaps.   The youth is at the heart of most governmental projects.   There are several initiatives that are meant to empower the youth. These have been rolled out.   We have a bank for the youth that finances projects, including projects in youth ICT sector.   This is meant to help youth in Burundi to have access to the Internet.   So we have hubs in rural areas to help that.   Through the sixth ICT development plan, the Government of Burundi has committed to eliminate the digital divide.   And women and youth are a priority topic.   Burundi has huge potential that is the (inaudible), including energy and the implementation of the ITC policy.   We need to have qualified human resources.   We need to keep pace with the fast development of ICTs. And we are on a good way to meet this challenge.   Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for your insight and sharing your expertise with us.   Kindly restrict ourselves to three minutes so we can conclude the round table on time.   I will go ahead and invite the Ministers. And when we are done with that, we will come back and invite the Deputy Ministers here.   Thank you very much.

Ethiopia, Gabon.   Invite the Minister of innovation and technology of Ethiopia.   His Excellency.

>> ETHIOPIA: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.   And the Excellencies and Distinguished Guests from around the world, attending this summit here, thank you.   I just want to share briefly the experience of Ethiopia, my country about the ICT sector.   Innovation and technology, the ministry which I'm leading has been identified as one of the five sectors that are considered to be the most critical for Ethiopia's aspiration to digitally transform the economy.   We have agriculture, Ministry of Industry, and -- may I continue?

So the Government has given emphasis for the ICT sector.   So it has been identified as one of the most critical for Ethiopia's ambition to digitally transform the economy.

Ethiopia has liberalized its telecom sector.   It is now to begin operation very soon.   We expect that second operator will come soon.

That will transform the ICT and telecom sector.   Ethiopia is one of the

second most populous nation in Africa.   And we have 58.5 million people who have subscribed to mobile phones.   This is a big achievement.   The Government has established a huge ICT part, international companies have already come to Ethiopia and they have put in place a Big Data center.   So when they have operation, it will transform connectivity, power.

>> CHAIR: Sorry.   We should avoid making any phone call during a Round Table.   When you make a phone call you allow somebody to follow the phone call and it brings distraction.   Go ahead, please.

>> ETHIOPIA: Ambitious project of expanding eGovernment and services.   Now at this time many Governments, institutions have already transformed their services digitally.   And as I said this morning, 5G technology has been launched last month.   So this will also help in our plan of transforming the economy digitally.

And one last point will be -- the idea submit this December, and hopefully many international actors and Governments who are present here will come and attend this Summit.   So I want to pass this call as well.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for your intervention and also your contribution.   Glad to hear that ICT is among the five critical sectors of your country.   And I would encourage other Ministers if they don't have this in their country, we try to make sure that ICT is among the top five, even among the top three.   It is the key enabler in health and agriculture and education.   Making it that priority it will give more attention and Government will give more attention to it.   It is no more a luxury.   It becomes a necessity.   So glad to hear this and congratulations on that.

Gabon.   I invite the Minister in charge of Digital Economy, His Excellency, from Gabon.   You may wish to go ahead, please.

>> GABON: Thank you, Chairman, for giving me the floor.   And thank you most especially for the 45 minutes that you are giving me to -- because three minutes is not enough.   Just a few --

>> CHAIR: I hope you respect that.   Go ahead, please.   You have exhausted 40 seconds.

>> GABON: Thank you.   Very quickly, the situation of Gabon's situation in this field is -- since the year 2000, the Government and public/private initiatives have allowed us to go from 100 pylons to 1,000 pylons in 2022.   We have about 2,000 kilometers of backbone fiber optic network connecting us to the Republic of Congo, Cameroon and soon equatorial Guinea.   We have three submarine cables.   We have the European cable, secondly we have the African transit 3 and the backbone national which covers a great proportion of our territory.

All of this infrastructure and policies opening our market have made it possible to give Gabon telecommunications infrastructures and achieve a penetration rate of 85% and moving from nearly to 95%.   So what are we doing to reduce the digital divide?   The acceleration of the transformation

process for one.   In our country we have prioritized action for our Government.   We want to complete what we have done in the sector to achieve our full potential.

We have three main objectives, making the state a pilot actor in digital transformation through public procurement policies and a one-stop shop. That the main Gabonese company is onboard and attract private capital to national backbone network to give access to affordable Internet connections to the final user.

In order to improve connectivity in the white areas, or we should call them black areas perhaps, we are setting obligations for serving areas with low economy, low income areas.   For operators we are developing a universal service fund this has been enacted by law.   This will help us reduce the digital divide and we have indicators which I mentioned earlier.   Thank you very much for your attention.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for your submission.   Four minutes and 21 seconds.   So thank you very much.   Glad to hear the progress you have been making.

We move to Guyana.   I will invite His Excellency Minister in the office of the Prime Minister.   You may wish to go ahead, please.

>> GUYANA: Thank you very much Mr. Chair and Excellencies.   I would like to illustrate my presentation and to recognize that Guyana has made serious progress towards ICT.   We currently have an ICT plan 2030. And as part of the manifest promise of the Government of The people's party, we recognize ICT is very important, being able to connect every citizen to the future.   We, for example, in our first budget cycle have removed taxes on data, for example.   So we are free of that.   We have been able to remove the monopoly on telecommunication which existed for over 20 years.   So we have been able to open up the telecommunication sector.   And particularly liberalizing the telecommunication sector we are encouraging special incentive towards business who wished, partners in business who wish to be able to establish telecommunication services to our citizens, and we also have been providing much financial support to expanding our -- the infrastructure for ICT, particularly Internet focusing on the interland and the coastal areas of Guyana. And, you know, over the last few days indeed we have been here.   And we have been able to find the session very insightful and productive.

Very instructive as well.   Instructive because many of the challenges we face, for example, during the pandemic and those which we still face, reveal very common threads across the global framework.   And adapted to our various national spaces.   When we talk about ICT for well-being inclusion and resilience we are addressing a monumental issue, fragile underdeveloped societies that must be able to adapt and to adapt quickly with depleting and stretched resources to keep up with the ever transforming and fast-paced global landscape in ICTs.   Against this backdrop the application of more mundane ingredients for development, those between our society's

well-being.   The inclusion of all, especially those for the forest, construction of basins of resilience within the national structures to with stand these current and future blows to our development become even more taxing.   You see colleagues, and Excellencies, I believe that as many if not all of you can appreciate that it is all well and good when our Government finds ways and means to prioritize meager resources.   In effort to help our countries and societies to keep us as best as possible with evolution of the very nature of how we deliver public service.   By and large we find ways to adopt and streamline those efforts and resources to targeted needs intended to impact well-being and foster inclusion.

However, the most challenging task comes in trying to build resilience and in Guyana's case, for example, the seasonal floods that we have to work with on an annual basis which we have to be able to concentrate back to the COVID, many mitigating circumstances when we are faced with the seasonal floods at home, and therefore, divert resources to cushion the impact of those who make sure that our people's lives and the communities are taken care of.

We are generally, Mr. Chair, I see you already have the gavel, but while we look forward to the next few discussions that will be coming from our my colleagues, I'm expected to hear and look forward very interestingly to the various perspectives and insights on the initiatives and interventions that impact well-being and inclusion.   I'm keen in hearing those perspectives.   And therefore I thank you very much for the opportunity.   I will invite the sanction here from the --
(Talking at the same time).
>> CHAIR: Just a reminder that nobody will sanction you here.   Just to remind you, the earlier reminded from there and then I said let me use my gavel to remind you.   It is just a reminder on the first reminder.
>> GUYANA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman for being a very good Chairman.
>> CHAIR: I appreciate your contribution, particularly glad to hear that no tax on data law.   This is indeed a very encouraging particularly countries that are trying to develop the ICT sector.   It could not be forever.   But it is good sometimes to relax so that the sector can grow before maybe you bring other things in to light.   I think that's commendable.   Secondly, you touched another issue saying that decisions have been important to you.   You are confronted with the challenges.   And I discover throughout our discussion we focus more on achievements rather than challenges.   I do hope that we -- the way we mention achievements is good to mention one or two challenges.   So that we will be able to join our hands together and come up with maybe a proposed solution to it.   So I plead with my colleagues that whenever we mention achievements, there is no harm in bringing out one or two challenges for us to join our hands and identify the solution.   Thank you very much.   We move to India.   And I will invite His Excellency, the Minister of State for communications to speak.   You may wish to go ahead, please.

>> INDIA: Thank you, Chairman.   Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, my greetings to all of you.   At the outset, I would like to congratulate ITU and WSIS for hosting this session.   We recognize the role of ICT as an important tool for digital transformation.   Inclusive growth and stimulation of economies.   To meet the SDGs.   India believes in the principle of commitment, development of people at the bottom of the pyramid.   The marginalized people.   Living in power plants areas and cut off from the mainstream.   For development of ICT infrastructure.   600,000 villages are being connected between optic fiber.   Small and remote islands and other inaccessible areas are being connected.   We also believe in cell plans and technology.   Design and manufacturing.   India has developed 4G core and radio access networks design and tested in India.   It helps the operators to choose any vender and reduces the cost and enables zero expenses. Indigenous 5G stack is expected to be rolled out by August 2022.

If production link incentives has been launched to manufacturers all the wireless systems in India.   We are launching an R&D fund for funding development of telecom technology.

Aiming at digital inclusion, Government is willing digital public platform such as R2 COVID for contact tracing.   COVID vaccination program.   Alexa for online education.   More than 200 eGovernment services are being provided in India through the mobile app.   We are creating open public digital platforms.   These are all open source platform.

Will be taken to support Developing Countries in the task of digital inclusion through platforms.   The digital platform, universal payments, interface or UPI across -- one trillion in transaction in the financed year 2021-22 with a number of transactions hitting 5 billion in April 2022.   Digital inclusion is possible in media, due to the (inaudible) as envisaged by Prime Minister.   People's banking program providing bank accounts for 40 million unbanked concerns.   Other or bio -- 33 million and 1.16 million mobile connections.   India is happy and willing to share expert knowledge with developing nations and regions for growth and development of ICTs for ultimate objectives for meeting the sustainable goals.   Thank you all once again.   Thank you again.

>> CHAIR: Thank you.   Thank you Your Excellency.   India is a giant country with a population of around 1.3 billion.   So I believe there is a very big case study for any country willing to learn from you.   Glad to learn from your insights.   We move to Iran, the Minister of communication and information technology, His Excellency.   You may wish to proceed.

>> ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: In the name of God I would like to start with thanking you Isa Ali Ibrahim and your colleagues for managing and arranging 2022 WSIS Forum.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

>> ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: More than 153 years ago Iran joined ITU, which comes from our profound and historical belief in the significance of

multilateral arrangements in the international society.   With our efforts, we pursued to harness ICT and empowering and strategic technology first to improve the well-being of our citizens, and second, to increase productivity and economic advancement based on digital and data economy.   I would like to take my time to draw your attention to a doable challenge although my country Iran has made many achievements in the field of communication and information technology.

We believe the lack of responsibility of mainstream platforms which with mainly became a potential for criminal activities prevents the Governments from fulfilling the rights of their citizens.   This noncooperation added to the illegitimate UCMs has led to recoverable damage.   This restrictive measures create the digital gap and increase the reliability and access to new technology. The disruption in the way of fulfillment of Government obligations of citizens is another result of the mention unilateral restrictive measures.

Mr. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen, from Islamic Republic of Iran, platform for discussions about the before mentioned problems.   We believe as a fundamental necessity to local values civilizations and cultural requirements of the nations should be taken in to consideration in any worldwide policy making and the right of local cyberspace legislation should be respected.   In order to promote Digital Economy of all nations, securing fair competition among worldwide platforms and local services and platforms should be considered by all 6.   In order to support the human right, particularly privacy of the end users, the mainstream platforms should be responsive to the local regulatory authorities in the context of state sovereignty.   We believe nations with common history, ecosystem and language should cooperate through regional institution and collaboration which makes them here will be hopefully resulted in legal responsibility of worldwide platforms.   Finally, the Government of Iran request this civilization regional initiative would be recorded as Iran's proposal and this delegation will be pleased to have an elaborate discussion about the aforementioned elements.   Thank you so much for listening to me.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Your Excellency for sharing both your achievements and the challenges and also your proposal is well noted.

And I do hope that the Secretariat will take note of that before the end of the discussion since we are going around.   Thank you very much.   We move to Kazakhstan.   Is the Minister here?   Glad to hear you have a Ministry of Digital development, innovations and aerospace industry.   This is indeed encouraging to see a ministry in charge of that.   His Excellency is invited. You may wish to proceed.

>> KAZAKHSTAN: Thank you.   My great pleasure to be part of this remarkable event.   Let me outline the journey of our Government to form the basis of information society.   As a prior step our government has automized the public services.   It is 90% public services and digitized.   But during the pandemic we realized that the -- it is just a number.   Because if the real -- human centric automization is there why people are not and able to use

all of these services.   And because of that, we established a new strategy to do redesigning the processes first.   Not only the automization of the process but go through redesigning.   Building the Government, the bureaucratic processes.

And for now we are doing great.   I think, for example, we started to analyze and question those processes whether we need them at all.   In short we are changing our mindset by reconsidering the processes.

Take, for example, changing ownership of the real estate.   Prior to these people had to go to four or five authorities dealing with each public offices and waiting necessary process to be done.

Now this process were simply reduced to one and only then digitized.   Here is another example.   Our citizens can break a deal on car selling on a bank platform.   The banks have connected to public database and brokered the deals now.   So no one goes to Government anymore because we reviewed the processes.

The same with the mortgage.   I will not stop on this but they are also conducted by virtual platforms, saving money and time of our citizens.   I mean you can get a mortgage in the bank during a day without going anywhere now.

And that selling vehicles also you can do through the mobile platforms, no visiting.   No public service anymore.   What we are placing with, we are unable to use digital I.D.s in our Government.   I mean internal flights, not asking the driver's license because all data is in database.   But what we are faced with during the pandemic, we are all here, we are responsible for the ICT development, but during the pandemic, we didn't -- we didn't -- I mean recognize or build the right standard to -- for the vaccination passport, for example.   Everywhere different vaccination passports and how we can recognize if it is fake or not.   I mean and this kind of actions can be solved by putting the standards on the digital documents.   And the digital interoperability of the data between the Governments.

When you want to exchange citizenship, for example, you need to do the paperwork and then go to the -- another authority of another Government and put on the table, I mean a lot of papers but why not to make -- I mean this digital gateway global gateway of APIs of the public services.   And I want to initiate initiative to make this happen.   I mean Intergovernmental, interstate, interoperability happen.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for sharing your journey so far.   And there are many interesting things, particularly digital I.D. and your one-stop shop and many more.   Thank you very much.   And we move to the next one, permit me to acknowledge the presence of the Minister of communications, science and technology from Lesotho, His Excellency.   I just recognize.   They are ready to comment?

>> LESOTHO: Yes.   It won't be three minutes.   It will be one minute. Lesotho has established different laws.   The first one is the cybersecurity law,

which has indicated that there was a lot of cybercrime in the country now that we are right in the center of South Africa.   And that law has just been enacted. It is now in the upper chamber.   We have also developed the radio systems from analog to digital by installing 20 towers in the mountain kingdom for people to get broadcasting without having to go through the normal radio systems.   The digital platforms in the finance sector has -- have been improved.   And the most successful platform that we have identified is in relation to the reporting on the COVID-19 statistics.

Vaccination certificates and reporting on COVID-19 records.

The report is being done online.   And reported accordingly, only by the use of the national I.D. and also the use of the telephone number.   And then the -- they have been transmitted digital to individuals.   Finally, there is a project being supported by the African Development Bank where the e-services are planned to be implemented where the national IV, all the services of Government will be digitalized and provided in the next I think 12 months because the target is March 2023.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.   Your contributions are acknowledged and appreciated.

We move to Malawi, His Excellency.   Minister of information and digitalization.   Your Excellency, you may wish to proceed, please.

>> MALAWI: Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, of course, Honorable Ministers from different Member States, Ladies and Gentlemen, Malawi would like to take this opportunity to thank the co-organizers for a well organized and successful 2022 World Summit on the information society WSIS Forum.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I had an opportunity to participate in one of the high level policy sessions whose topics brought on inclusiveness, access to information, and knowledge for all, bridging digital divides.   I am proud to inform you all that coincidentally in Malawi that's what we are doing.   We are having to make laws.   We just passed a law access to information law and Malawi has become one of the very, very few countries in Africa.   I'm not too sure if Europe has all the countries with this law but we have done it in Malawi.   This is a law that will make public information accessible by law to the citizenry.

>> CHAIR: Freedom of information.

>> MALAWI: Access to information.

>> CHAIR: Is it personal or Government?

>> MALAWI: No, no.   Government.   Access to information because we -- we felt that the two have to go together while we are developing digitally, we have to make sure we are making available information.   In January of 2021 as the Minister responsible for ICT and digitalization, I guess, the access to information act regulation, subsidiary regulation to facilitate sufficient implementation of access to information.   The Government is contributing capacities of all public institutions to ensure that they are always available to

provide information that's required by the public and as government institutions we ensure as much as possible that our information is digitized for easy storage.   So in this case digitalization is a must because we would want to find it easier to access this information.   It is important to note that this initiative pointed out the new Government's promises which included commitment to reduce the cost of ICT services through among other things, review of the taxation regime of ICT sector, extending broadband Internet connection to all urban and rural areas through rural to the fiber optic cable network and removal of all tariffs and nontariff barriers on equipment and devices, including laptops.   Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, in conclusion, Malawi would like to reiterate the need for ITU and partners to embrace the outcomes of this 2022 WSIS Forum in its work.   We want to call upon for the continued culture, continued culture where small countries like ours can be given a platform but at the same time their voices must be heard. And would like to also call upon the organizers to ensure that the agenda here should actually include everyone.   It shouldn't be an agenda for big countries. But I think all the smaller countries, Malawi and others and a few others must be head and must be part of the shaping of the policy at this level.   Once again thank you very much.   And wishing you all the best.   Thank you for your attention.   Thank you.

    >> CHAIR: Thank you very much for sharing information with us. This is highly commended.   Furthermore, based on your observation on the involving smaller countries, I believe there is a program dedicated for that with ITU and also under WSIS.   I may be -- maybe after the event I will advise that you reach out to her, the secretary here.   There are programs for that.   And definitely at the could be very beneficial to your country and many other countries.

    Thank you very much.

    We move to Malaysia.   This is a video to be played from the Minister on contribution.   The Minister of communications and multimedia, His Excellency from Malaysia.   The video may wish to speak.   Thank you.

    >> MALAYSIA: Distinguished Delegates, Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for allowing me the honor to share Malaysia's experience in ensuring inclusiveness and access to information and knowledge during the World Summit on the information society High-Level Forum 2022.

    Access to and adoption of digital services are crucial, not only for Digital Economy, but also in achieving inclusiveness, and access to information and knowledge.

    It is also important in achieving the many targets on the Sustainable Development Goal 2030 under the United Nations.

    Access is ensured through the national digital network, which is an industrial led plan formulated by Malaysian communications and multimedia communication to accelerate digital connectivity, narrow the digital divide, providing quality and inclusive telecommunication services to our citizens

while readying the country for 5G connectivity.

The target set from 2020 to 2022 includes firstly, increased 4G coverage from 91.8% to 96.9% in populated areas.   Secondly, increased average mobile broadband speed from 25 megabit per second to 35 megabits per second.   Thirdly, 7.5 million with access to gigabit speed.   And fourthly, the accelerated launch of 5G services in two phases, encompassing the urban and rural areas.   We are well on digitalization journey with 7 million (inaudible) passed with gigabit access.

While 4G coverage has reached 95.7% of populated areas as of first quarter 2022.   In this regard adoption initiatives are also undertaken to encourage use of digital technologies and to drive utilization of the existing infrastructure, particularly in rural areas and among the urban poor.   To streamline and further strengthen the digital economy and Digital Economy centers are introduced across the nation to provide collective Internet access to the underserved communities as well as becomes a one stop center for the development of local micro entrepreneurs in digital adoption.

Next, the students in the low income category will receive loan devices under the student device initiative to ensure no one is left behind in class due to the lack of affordable electronic devices.   At community centers, community devices are not available for local communities.   Additionally, providing affordable Internet access and smart devices to the youth package and device package targeted at new and lower income groups to equip them with online connectivity.

As we fulfill target under the Sustainable Development Goal 2030, Malaysia's efforts in providing access to quality digital infrastructure and services and encouraging adoption of digital technologies will drive inclusiveness and access to information and knowledge.

This will not only assist the country as we exit the pandemic but give renewed (inaudible) to the businesses and society as Malaysia transitions in to the Digital Economy.   With that I thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: We appreciate the video contribution from the Minister. Our colleague from Malaysia.

The next one I think is going to be remotely, the Minister of information technology and innovation, from Mauritius.   You may wish to allow him to speak remotely.

>> MAURITIUS: Excellencies, Secretary-General, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, warm greetings from Mauritius to all of you in Geneva and around the world.   I'm indeed enlightened that we are united once again for this Round Table and around the team ICT for well-being, inclusion and resilience with this cooperation for accelerating progress on the SDGs.   Dear colleagues, as a candidate for the within the Africa, we recognizes the crucial role of telecommunication and ICTs.

We are currently working towards the acceleration of the development in this sector to contribute in the digital transformation of our society.   This will

pave the way for sustainable growth and so as to achieve the SDGs of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations.

In line with this vision, Mauritius is also an ITU center of excellence in cybersecurity. On the other hand, Mauritius has achieved clear rankings internationally. We are 63rd globally on e-government index 2020 of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 17th globally in the rural cybersecurity index 2020 issued by ITU and first in Africa.

Recently, in the same line we have caused a new role in terms of cybersecurity, the cybersecurity and cybercrime act 2021 where we align ourselves with international standards and the Convention. 57th in the world in the Global Innovation Index, the GII, issued by WIPO and first in Africa. And 13th in the world by the World Bank in terms of ease of doing business with both 2020. I am also pleased to share with you Ladies and Gentlemen, that Mauritius we have reached an Internet coverage of 99%. Penetration at 177%. The inflation of 155%. And 500 homes at 100%. The whole country is fully fibered. Moreover we have launched our planet services already in regions of the island. And next year we are going to operate our fourth submarine cable. I would like to highlight that we have availability of one GB at home for those who would like to get such packages.

Ladies and Gentlemen, accelerating the digital of the continent will require much more. The ICT development individually. We will like to participate in drafting a common digital agenda under ITU Council along with all other countries, all other stakeholders to serve the term 2026. We are reaffirming our commitment to remain the digital gap in supporting ITU position in the UN.

Ladies and Gentlemen, coming back to the theme, concluding the moment, we must have all the success of the digitalization program rests on access for one role. And all to connect in other facilities. At the base of this incentive, digitalization project like the sound Internet connectivity over national and international level.

To conclude, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am convinced that the multi-stakeholder Forum is a live platform where we can share expertise and to address common issues and foster sustainable development, digital empowerment and inclusion for one and all. Together that forward partnership for achieving the SDGs using the ICT. I thank you very much for your attention.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for sharing your experience with us remotely. And particularly I am excited to hear your achievements in the area of cybersecurity which is also key to the development of ICT globally. We move to Minister of information and communication technology from Namibia.

>> NAMIBIA: Mr. Chairperson, and fellow Ministers, the importance of an enabling environment was recognized in the Declaration of Principles, and action plan of the first phase of the World Summit on the information society.

We can emphasize that a trustworthy transparent and nondiscriminatory

environment was essential for the use and growth of ICTs in the developing world in 2003.   ICT are one of the sectors which move very fact-based and double our efforts to connect the unconnected.   Namibia has developed laws.   There is however more that can be done.

We should jointly work together to ensure that we develop and harmonize our laws and policies that are responsive to the emerging trends and aim at the betterment of our citizens for no one should be left out.   The COVID-19 pandemic has shown and exposed ICT disparities.   People in unserved and underserved areas are still the most affected.   Not all children were able to learn online.   Not all employees were or are able to work remotely.

During the pandemic, we have experienced, still experiencing the power of ICT which has kept the world (inaudible) in terms of connectivity and disseminating information.   We need to maximize that stronghold to continue advocating for the use of ICT for socioeconomic development.   This program's theme is undoubtedly befitting the times that we are in.   We maximize on our stay here to share our experiences, deliberate on this critical aspect and map out the way forward.

It is also important to highlight that as much as we advocate for connectivity, we should equally place greater emphasis on sigh per security, and cooperation in this regard.

It is quite evident that cybercrimes are borderless and cybercriminals are working hard to cause disruption.   On the danger of cybercrime and importance of cybersecurity.

Namibia plans to build a more resilient economy for the benefit of its citizens.   No. 2, which calls for unity and encourage Namibians to work towards a common purpose.   Goal 4 of the plan highlights open access and infrastructure sharing as priority in Namibia.   We plans to implement an open access network, infrastructure sharing regime that will require dominate players to abide by these rules and reduce investment costs for ICT services and provide all equal access to all licenses in order to level the playing field.

I guess my time is up.   So thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for sharing your experience with us.   Particularly I appreciate one point on the need of educating and creating awareness on the dangers of cybersecurity, particularly to our youth.   That is something that is very important.

Thank you very much.

And then North Macedonia, Minister of information society and administration.   Your Excellency, you may wish to speak.

>> NORTH MACEDONIA: Thank you very much Chairman.   Dear fellow Ministers, Deputy Ministers, I would like to congratulate ITU for organizing this Forum because I already think it is a place where we can exchange ideas and we can establish partnerships between countries and help each other in our common endeavors.   As far as general plan of action is concerned, I think that -- I learned that there are countries that have reached

many objectives and as far as four Is are concerned, they are doing good.   But as we know many countries including mine we have a lot of work to do to make sure that we have good infrastructure concerning ICT, good investment and especially inclusiveness.   So our citizens have access to ICT technology.

As far as North Macedonia, my country is concerned, we are now focused more on having ultrafast Internet in all the countries because right now we have only 20% of it.   We have created the ministry, national broadband office which has prepared a national broadband plan.   And we plan in the coming two years to have -- to implement ultrafast Internet in all of the country.   This office is also preparing the DESA report which checks many components of the ICT.   We as a Minister we have focused on digital trans formation, especially of the institutions that give services to the citizens.   So we are better in giving services to the citizens.

As far as future is concerned, and as we know in new technologies is artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things robotics and so on, I think it is very necessary that countries, you know, just further their cooperation and I hope that ITU will be the connecting bridge between the countries for their cooperation.   Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much Your Excellency for sharing your thoughts with us.   Palestine, general personal counsel of the state of Palestine and His Excellency.   Your Excellency, you may wish to speak, please.

>> PALESTINE: Ladies and Gentlemen, I have --

>> CHAIR: Do we have Arabic today?   Okay.   There is a special -- No. 6.

>> PALESTINE: Go ahead.   Thank you so much for this great organization, which makes me think is important.   We are living in fast while and change which makes information and all human aspects.

Information technology is going fast, like high waves.   The most important question now is as a specialist, but a person who is also expecting for what the information technology will reach to.   So Palestine works along with the other countries, how to think about the human resources, which may -- which the information technology out of the marketplace.

There should be two tracks, one following the development.   And how to make these resources working with these development to be able to be stable and continent.   COVID-19 pandemic forced on us its agenda but it is forcing all countries to build their capabilities.   We learn lessons from the COVID-19, but these lessons are -- are in the -- are the national and international institutions. Are the commended.

So these experience exchange.   Is it documented to be able to see the future.   How to lead as a decision makers.   And build at the same time the future, the coming future.

The importance of using information technology, the positive important, is the means for all countries and states to enhance the citizen's trust in these Governments.   This needs a political will, how these states or countries should

use this science as one of the means to make a smart, transparent and accountable.

And avoid corruption in these countries.

Which makes all the -- all the people in the world stable.

The most important thing is to have achievements for us all.

And complete for persons.   But the most important is how to stand in solidarity with people which still need these experiences and how to share these experiences with them.   Palestine after the -- they can achieve (inaudible) is ready to contribute.   On providing any needs for all countries that we can select with the organizing party to transfer our experience.   In addition to that, in the national legislation cannot be enforced.   So we are in the state of Palestine, we will be able to establish our country with its general -- these general methods, capital.   Thank you so much.   I have lots of ideas.   But the Chairman is practicing the democracy and selecting time.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much Your Excellency for your recommendations and I believe the Secretariat is taking note of that.

We appreciate you.   Thank you very much.

And then we move to the Minister of community and information technology of Samoa, His Excellency.

>> SAMOA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.   Mr. Chairman Your Excellency, professor Isa Ali Ibrahim, Member States, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm from Simoa and I thank you for the opportunity to address this ministerial session today.   And we would like to thank ITU, Secretary-General and who everyone contributed to the organization of these events.   Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, with time limitations, inclusiveness and access to information and knowledge for all is a fundamental right.   A right to information is protected under the international human rights law.   And as we all know, Article 19.   The international Convention of civil and political rights to which Samoa acceded to in 2008.   In this regard the Government committed to fulfill the responsibility to make sure the islands are involved. We prosper through technology to name a few outcomes of our government commitment the.   Accessibility to Internet has reached 98%.   A policy framework in ICT sector development, such as one Government ICT platform, which is our form of digital transformation.

With a specific task to maintain the best fit technology to our needs.   With further investment in ICT industry, Government has committed to support social sector and especially the rural area which ICT will also play a vital role.

Mr. Chairman, from the Pacific region Samoa is an active leader member of the ICT society.   It is our government's commitment to ensure that accessibility does not stop at our borders, but also assisting our neighboring islands through knowledge sharing and in some areas South-South Cooperation.   Our focus remains to ensure benefits and opportunities activated through the use of technologies and our economy.

Mr. Chairman, this can only be achieved through global efforts through

cooperation and working together sharing resources, knowledges, and technologies.   Mr. Chairman, Samoa and the countries continue to face challenges and most of those challenges is common.

And on that note I would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to our global institution organizations and bilateral partners that assisted Samoa ICT development over the years.   Whether through financial support for infrastructure, or knowledge sharing.   So name a few the Commonwealth telecommunication organization, World Bank, Asia development bank, bilateral with the Government of Japan, the Government of Australia and the government of New Zealand to name a few.

The Government of Samoa acknowledges these areas and develop policy frameworks.   And we would love to share those with all colleagues here.

Excellencies, we wish you all the best.   And have a great week here in Geneva.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you Excellency for sharing your experience with us. You said the challenges are common to all.   So we should just make assumption of the challenges and glad to hear the progress you have been making.

This is indeed very commendable.   We move to the next one, Singapore. There is a video to be played for Minister from communications and Minister of health I think.   His Excellency, senior Minister of State.   Thank you.

>> SINGAPORE: Excellencies, it is my pleasure to speak at this year's World Summit on Information Society Forums ministerial Round Table.   The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the global digital revolution and its impact is a permanent structural shift in our economies and societies.   Digital technology is part of our daily lives at work and play.   We must continue to keep a watchful eye on vulnerable segments that have not been able to enjoy the benefits of going digital.   About 37% of the world's population, 2.9 billion persons remain unconnected.

In today's society the disadvantaged would be penalize in both the physical world and digital space if we disregard digital inclusivity and literacy. Even in Singapore, island with one highest Internet penetration in the world, many still lack the skills to use technology meaningfully and confidently.   The same issues apply to businesses, businesses unable to lever and digital tools.

In the digital space data is a Foundational building block.   Businesses can tap on the potential of cross-border data flows to reach out to customers in all corners of the world, to drive economic and social development.   Recognizing the importance of data in driving the next bound of digital growth, Singapore led a project together with ASEAN Member States to develop the ASEAN data framework.   And contractual clauses for cross-border data flows.   The data management framework is a set of rules to guide businesses in data management.

Reduce costs for businesses that may otherwise have to enter in to lengthy and expensive negotiations.   Put together these tools build trust amongst

ASEAN businesses and open the doors in to the larger southeast Asian digital. WSIS has recognize the benefits of the data management framework and the model contractual clauses which won the top award in the category of international and regional cooperation at the WSIS prizes this year. This would not have been possible without the cooperation of like minded ASEAN Member States. Singapore looks forward to working with the global community to build a more connected and inclusive digital world for all.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: So thank you very much. Glad to hear they are on effort, particularly on the data management framework that is indeed highly commendable.

We move to the next one, Minister of transport communications and tourism, His Excellency from Suriname. I think that one is going to be presented remotely. Thank you.

>> SURINAME: Thank you for this opportunity to be virtually part of this discussion. Chairman, Excellencies, participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, my warm greetings from Suriname, South America. Because. Limited time I will put a subject in one statement. I have had a short statement in the briefing session and will continue in the same context regarding this diversity, identity and local content. With regards to the culture and diversity E Excellencies, ICT must be the binding agent for joint approach. Create and stimulate equality in this approach must be a boundary condition. Suriname is a country with different ethnicities from all over the world. And every day we are demonstrating respect for each culture and strengthen each other in reaching our ICT goals.

However Excellencies, the identity in the same context with regards to the development of ICT we face challenges. But we have solutions. A Developing Country we have yet to (inaudible). Because of the fact that our current identity is strongly influenced by and formed on the basis of hundreds of years of western domination and also the ICT policies from the western countries. We are currently in the process of reshaping our identity and strongly influenced also by ICT. The basis of this lies once more in our history but we have to define this again together. I will repeat, we have to define this again together. Otherwise we won't have cultural diversity, but cultural coloring from different perspectives.

Excellencies, it is time. We now need to build bridges by setting up this paradigm differently, by ending ignorance and by bringing more ICT know how about our history will make cultural diversity more relevant. Excellencies, our culture diversity in ICT context will only become relevant when putting more efforts to develop rural areas. And it is precisely these steps that the United Nations need to promote more intensity. Next generations will challenge us what we have contributed to their development. I strongly ask special attention for my indigenous brothers and sisters, all over the world to contribute to their education in ICT and how to adapt.

Excellencies, participants, when talking about local content, the challenged countries like Suriname is concrete, more than 50% of our ICT professionals are going to the western countries.   They are moving to the western countries, looking, seeking for better jobs.   This is our challenge because we need them also for our own development.   The western countries accommodate them but we need to solve this together.

So you see Excellencies, three minutes are not enough.   But I'm convinced we can put hands together to work towards mutual ICT goals based on equality, and not on social status or profit.   Thank you Excellencies for your attention.   Greetings from Suriname.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Glad to hear your challenges and also your recommendations.   They are all noted by the Secretariat.   And I wish you all the best.

Thank you.   Another video to be played from the Minister of communications and technology of Syria.

>> SYRIA: Dear colleagues, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to participate for the third time in the WSIS Forum and to talk about the projects of the Ministry of Communications and technologies in the Syrian Arab Republics and its role in the IT society.   Actually despite the war against terrorism in the Syria and the past consequences of the Corona pandemic we managed to figure out and build up a strong infrastructure for the digital transformations and services in education, health, and economy.

And all the other vital sectors in less than three years ago.   In addition in order to accelerate a digital transformation by pushing the innovation and reducing it time and corruption with the minimum cost and resources, Syrian Ministry of Communication and technology had finished installing the cloud computing which we will be the core of my speech in this session.   Also we finished the entire procedure requirement to launch the third mobile operator which will be ready before end of this year.

Which will be -- which will insert the 5G to Syria.   That means help us to speed -- to speed us using IoT technology and the processing a huge volume of information quickly and safely.

Regarding the cloud computing which is the main of survival and seeking for XEIS infrastructure, platforms and software as a service.

Another point to highlight regarding to the huge amount of data produced from the e-services is that data is the eye and precious fortune in this age. Consequently many new technologies based on Artificial Intelligence data mining algorithm have managed presently in to existence.   However, these technologies require having computation power and storage space accordingly cloud computing solution have become the life savior in these situations.   And the solid platform that can unify and integrate all these technologies.   The users are more and more dependent on applications these days.

And they need to manage the integration of the various applications and increasing and they cannot be realized without the cloud computing.   Let me

mention here that our ministry has set up other measures and the requirement to organize the applications market in Syria.   In order to build a secure environment for the users free of malware and cyber attacks and to protect citizens' data privacy.   Furthermore, we are working to achieve inclusive affordable broadband access to information and knowledge for the persons in need and other people.   After having constructed the cloud our next project will be the (inaudible) which is an ecosystem solution that provides unified standardized and source data exchange.   It will be the backbone of all e-services which can combine different service and different data sources in an easy and cost efficiency way.

I warmly thank you very much for your kind attention and consideration with all my estimation and graduate to the ITU for giving me this time slot. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for the video.   We move to the next one, the Deputy Minister of -- from the Ministry of Research innovation and digital policy of Cypress.   His Excellency.

>> CYPRESS: Thank you, Chairman.   Excellencies, dear Delegates, the pandemic and recent world events have changed the way we work and do business.   In the last two years we learned the importance of being agile and able to quickly react and adopt to change.   We learned to turn challenges in to opportunities.   What I would like to stress is that digital tools and automation are not just drivers of profitability and growth.   They also provide a unique opportunity for nations and organizations alike to deliver substantial benefits to our environment and our people.   5G, AI, IoT and cloud are forming the landscape of tomorrow and provide all of us with unprecedented opportunities to stimulate economic activity, create high quality jobs and drive social progress and prosperity.   To deliver a Government that is digital to its core and to boost the digital transformation in Cypress, a dedicated Ministry of Research innovation and digital policy was established in March 2020.   Our action plan is fully in line with the EU 2030 policy program, the WSIS Action Lines and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

More specifically, we are revealing government IT infrastructure by adopting a cloud first policy and the SSR model.   We are integrating the various public sector information systems and databases to ensure adherence to the once only principle.   At the same time key strategic enablers give people control over their online identity and data when they access public, private and cross-border digital services.   To facilitate the rapid production of quality digital micro services we are building a digital services factory aiming to industrialize the delivery of digital services using agile methodologies.

With regard to our digital infrastructures, our new broadband plan sets ambitious strategic objectives that will be realized through targeted investments to ensure gigabit connectivity for all.

Through this plan, every household will be able to connect to the Internet with a fiber connection.   100% of the population will have an uninterrupted

5G coverage.   Our national digital skills plan focuses on scaling, rescaling, upscaling information at all levels of society, including of ICT specialists.   This significant progress is reflected in the overall implementation level of SDG 9 that progressed from a low average of less than 40% in 2017 to 72% in 2020, marking the biggest progress made by Cypress in all SDGs.

It is clear to us that the digital transformation is not an easy task but a rather complex one that requires targeted building targeted actions building networks, delivering digital services and enabling people and businesses to use them.   This way, we will ensure a trust inclusive and prosperous future for all. Thank you for your attention.

>> CHAIR: I appreciate the new Ministry has been established in line with the WSIS agenda among others.   This is indeed commendable.   Thank you very much.

We move to Argentina, which is another remote presentation by the Secretary of State which is a ministerial level of technological innovation of the public sector of the chief of the cabinet of Minister's offices, Excellency, Her Excellency.

>> ARGENTINA: Thank you.   Good afternoon Excellencies and fellow Ministers.   It is a pleasure to make this relevant Round Table.   Since the approval of the Geneva, the information society and ICTs have really evolved. The COVID pandemic certainly demonstrated the key role that ICTs play in and the well-being and full exercise of citizen's rights.   They are fundamental in this process of revealing our economies as a sector of connectivity and duration.   Our work is not yet done.   We must not lose sight that in many countries, especially developing ones connectivity and widespread use of ICTs is not yet achieved.   Lack of connectivity inevitably leads to lack of opportunities and social exclusion.   Public policy must target these issues to advance the career of compliance societies through a strategies that are both innovative and support ICTs.   We should also consider each country's reality in particular situation.   In our case Argentina -- it is divided in to 24 provinces. Local Governments are absolutely different from each other.   We have our cities small towns and remote areas.   And within this diversity, through the federal public digital transformation program we work with provincial local administrations to bring the state closer to its citizens, facilitate process and create opportunities for everyone.   We implement a digital solution for the systems and incorporation of digital signers.   This is done through technology and resource provision from the secretary of the innovation of the public sector based on the principles of interoperability and existence of digital standards. We focus on the federalization and transparency of digital public governance. This also contributes to the access and skill gaps.   From our secretary we promote human-centered policies.   That's why our transformation process is both digital but also cultural.   We work in each jurisdiction, taking in to account their similarities and the people involved.

This is our commitment to each and every one of our local and Provincial

administrations.   We work together from -- for the well-being.   Through the federal digital product information program, ICTs become an enabler of innovation, inclusion and resilience, contributing to the effective achievement of the sten Sustainable Development Goals.   Thank you and back to you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for your remote contribution.   That is indeed appreciated.   We move to the next one, that is a remote presentation also from Cambodia.   So it is another remote one from the Secretary of State.   His Excellency.

>> CAMBODIA: Thank you.   It is my privilege to participate in this ministerial Round Table.   On behalf of Ministry of Telecommunication of Cambodia I would like to express our sincere appreciation to ITU, UNESCO and UNCTAD for hosting and co-organizing this event.   Communication and digital (inaudible) has been playing important roles in development of economy and solution of our society.

During COVID-19 pandemic, digital connectivity and technology has been served as a efficient tool for our response.   Digital communication has been played and timely and efficiently to support national chain of actions against COVID-19.   Such as guaranteeing -- contact tracing, online for rapid test and medicine.   Vaccination, digital vaccine certificate and COVID reporting system.   The success of fighting against COVID-19, will not happen in there is no strong leadership of the Prime Minister.   Commitment from all levels of Government officials, participation from private sector, Civil Society and Cambodian people.   After COVID-19 Cambodia is moving to a Digital Economy and society in the context of post-pandemic recovery, global rising prices of oil and food and digital logistic disruption.   The government of Cambodia has adopted the Digital Economy.   And the digital Government policy 2022 and 2035.   Fit for -- focus on digital citizens, digital Government and digital business.   In addition, lessons learned from COVID-19 have provided more insight on the way of first adoption of digital technology with application of once principle and national coordination and international cooperation.

Two, the challenges of cybersecurity and the human resources in digital skills.   Excellencies, Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, to contribute to collective effort to foster the progress of SDGs I would like to make three proposals for our Round Table discussion despite an emerging sign on the decline of COVID-19 pandemic.   The world remains on high with emerging drains.   Whereas digital technology roles remain eminent in ensuring well-being of our people.

Thus, it is crucial that we need to assess the impact of digital technology on our daily living to answer the questions related to digital divide.   The digital divide that's not only accounted for digital connectivity, but also for digital literacy to improve people's living.   Second, we need to focus.   The more people use the more personal and private data generated, there is an emergence of and use of personal data and it is including the bridge by major

companies.   Third, well-being of human life also relies on surrounding environment, it is time for us to focus on implementing the smart use of digital technologies to support the environmental sustainability and initiatives to combat climate change.   Finally, allow me to ensure you that since its membership to the ITU in 1952 and to the United Nations in 1955, Cambodia remains strongly committed to play a role to rely on the ITU initiative and United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.   I wish you all the success and good luck in your future endeavors.   Thank you for your kind attention.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for your remote participation.   And apologies for small distractions.   Permit me to skip some of our colleagues here.   And invite the Minister from Poland, Her Excellency, Prime Minister, High Representative for Government technology head of Government to speak due to some other critical engagements that will take her outside the hall immediately.   You may wish to go ahead, Your Excellency.

>> POLAND: I wanted to briefly touch on what we are doing as Government in the field of digital education.   Which is a key element of the Sustainable Development Goals.   In the face of the ongoing invasion most of these resources are serving Polish as well as Ukrainian children.   There are 4.6 million school children and 1.3 million university students at 47,000 schools.   And about 500 University respectively.   They are taught by over 500,000 teachers.   During the pandemic, this groups had to switch to remote schooling nearly overnight.   This was post school.   Only thanks to commitment and endurance.   So our strategy focuses on three key areas.   Skills, connectivity and equipment.   With the overall goal of reaching full digital readiness in the upcoming years.   And becoming a lighthouse for the rest of Europe in terms of what how and how is taught in schools.   All those efforts are needed to supply the Polish economy with the well equipped skilled workforce.   As about half of our economy is data driven today.   Poland today spurs the highest number of graduates.   The acceleration is even faster.   This is why we set up programs.   We are currently considered Europe's most friendly location for immigrating specialists from the east with about 50% choosing us.   We issued over 30,000 special and intend to expand this further.   Poland is about to spend over 60 billion Polish on data transformation.   We invite you to be a part of this effort.   Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for sharing your plan with us.   The effort of your country is highly commendable.   And particularly glad to hear the -- that you have the second highest number of graduates within the European Union in ICT.   This is indeed very commendable.

So we move to the Vice-Minister of digital agenda, presidency of Dominican Republic.   His Excellency.   And I think that one is a physical one. Go ahead.

>> DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Thank you.   Ministers, speaking on behalf of the Government the Dominican Republic we congratulate you for organizing

this important event.   Our national strategy of digital transformation based on WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals includes the approach on human right, gender inclusion and management of risk.   Rhetorical cohesion social participation and accountability.   That's why today we have a strategy that's closing the gap in digital society and compare the gaps in to digital opportunity.   Despite the facts that the projects including in our digital agenda have started their execution less than a year ago, we have already presented several relevant achievements.   We start the option of the radio spectrum for several frequencies have been assigned to start the deployment of 5G.   That's beginning to be offered to the public by telephone companies.   More than 2 million public school students, 70% of all students have been equipped with electronic devices.   And regional cybersecurity training center has been put in to operation with a support of the European Union.   The procedures has been enacted and the 0 progress program have been created.   The single interpretability platform was put in to operation and yesterday our Presidents announced the national innovation policy which is perfectly linked to the digital agenda.

As you said, professor, we have a big challenge.   That's why for this same year we plan to launch a few projects, single health records to improve the health services and COVID management and others to improve our citizen's quality of life and our economy.

To conclude, as a suggestion, we recommend that ITU continue to support our countries in the improvement of the development of telecommunications digital transformation and cybersecurity.

Through the creation of regional Working Groups.   In this way we will take giant steps taking advantage of the shared experience and support between our countries.   Thank you for your attention.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.   Your request to ITU has been noted.   And many thanks to -- for sharing your experience and your plan with all of us.   And apologies, please my colleagues, there is going to be another brief Round Table and one of our colleagues here are supposed to join.   Permit me to invite them to speak briefly before they move to the other session.

They are from South Africa.   Permit me to start with the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Communications and digital technologies of South Africa.   His Excellency.   You may wish to speak before you -- sorry.   He has already left. So no problem.

The Minister of economics and innovation, or rather advisement of economy and innovation of Lithuania, Her Excellency.

>> LITHUANIA: Thank you.   I will try to squeeze in as fast as possible.   We all view the world differently.   All countries have their own issues.   Have their own global challenges and national challenges.   For us in Lithuania in our region, the past two years have changed our lives forever. First of all, COVID, second the war in Ukraine, Russian aggression in Ukraine which has changed the situation including our digital policies and our digital

goals.

Now back to topic sustainable development and our goals and our actions towards it, sustainable development is certainly Lithuania's aspiration and ultimate goal. Recent studies show that Lithuanian outlook towards sustainable development is already in the level of Nordic countries. So the past 30 years of our independence have certainly made a difference. And we have arrived at least in this sense. You might not know a very interesting fact that the Nordic Baltic countries we all have around the sea, that's the most polluted in the world. So even though the countries themselves are quite developed, especially our neighbors in the north, we have our own ecological sustainability. What can we propose as Lithuania and this comes from our legislative changes that have been adopted recently as green data centers and the secular economy in ICT and electronics. We are working towards that. Not many providers can provide solutions for this. But there are definitely global players and national players that are ready to adopt this challenge. I think as the time goes by this will become more and more topical for a lot of countries. And the second point and my last point is digitalization as a tool for sustainable development. Of course, the digitalization can also contribute to solutions that are more resource efficient and contribute to sustainable development. In other areas of society, our focus and our proposal is, of course, Smart Cities and sustainable cities and create the regions including 5G, IoT, AI digitalization a tool. I had a much longer speech but since it is three minutes I thank you all for the attention. I hope we can all speak together this evening and hope Lithuania can contribute more to the ITU's work and Sustainable Development Goal via the national level and via our candidacy to ITU.

>> CHAIR: Thank you for sharing your experience and management goals. If you exhaust your speech you may wish to share with us so that the secretary will go through it and find many more things that are relevant to our discussion and this will be accommodated. So thank you very much.

We move to Mongolia. Sorry. Apologies, Georgia. Deputy Minister of economy and sustainable development His Excellency. If I don't pronounce your name correctly, apologies.

>> GEORGIA: Thank you very much. Correct name. Excellencies, dear Ministers, allow me to extend my sincere gratitude for the invitation to take part of the WSIS Forum 2022. Every year this Forum is a good opportunity to discuss the tremendous role of the ICTs. To accelerate progress, and to reach Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. And to share the best practices between the countries.

The WSIS Action Lines are strongly connected with the implementation of the SDGs, and ICTs are on the one hand and the powerful means to extend economic opportunities to millions of people all over the world to protect our planet, to overcome like social gaps, and ensure prosperity for everyone. Enable the growth and development. Forcing the evolution. Promises

tremendous changes. Advances such as the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, blockchain and cloud computing, bring the significant impact to the global economy. We will be -- I'm concerned by the advanced technologies. The aim of our strategies adopted by the Government of Georgia in 2020 on the broadband infrastructure is to connect, to develop the broadband infrastructure locally and internationally as well. And to increase the digital skills and demand which, of course, are in accordance with the WSIS lines to reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Excellency, I wish you all the best and wish you a good day. Thank you for your attention.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for sharing your insight, your effort and your plan with us. We move to Greece again. Permit me to invite the Secretary-General of telecommunications, post and over the Ministry of Our digital governance of Greece. His Excellency. Your may wish to speak.

>> GREECE: Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Glad to see you.

>> GREECE: Good evening. And from our experience it has proven that this transformation as a great potential in our society by using the digital divide and improving the quality of life and as well as mitigating climate change. ICTs play a major role as a key catalyst in all three pillars of sustainable development, economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection. In Greece major digital policies have been endorsed, that reflect our vision, not leaving no one behind. This translates in to not leave anyone unconnected. Need for Internet access whereas the number of mobile cellular subscriptions seem to have overpassed global population. It is to minimize the substantial digital divides between regions in rural and urban areas and support social and economic development.

Lowering coming from that prevail in rural areas and reduce takeup and usage of ICTs. However, the deployment of fiber infrastructure and transition from 4G to 5G, may offer broadband capacity across all areas will be an opportunity for policymakers to introduce new services to have proven to be a sufficient way and develop our economies. Greece is one of the few countries in Europe that has its own operation civil and military Government seat lite communication systems. In cooperation with our satellite operator Elasat it is one of our priorities of the Government. We welcome the creation of pan European hub on the principle of sharing resources of all existing systems. Today I was very happy to see that the Elasat was awarded for assisting the country of Zimbabwe we establishing in 127 hospital free satellite broadband Internet. Congratulations to Elasat and also part of this.

As far as ICTs are concerned, due to the COVID-19 pandemic a growing dependencies on ICT was developed in all our societies that appear to be in a broad activities. Work education, all the health and others. By ensuring a confident and secure environment of the ICTs we minimize lack of trust while we maximize the positive impact of digital transformation of our societies. At the same time protect the vulnerability and digital citizens and our children.

Additionally, we believe that ITU standards assist our Governments in transforming our cities in to smart sustainable cities, benefitting from the use of technology by monitoring the sustainable growth of our communities.   As a conclusion, and I will close, it is evident that the growth of our economies and well-being has a direct link of use of ICTs that are provided at our national policy advocate a secure digital environment for our citizens.   Harnessing the potential benefits of ICT requires the resilient broadband infrastructures and services and digital skills.   Our collaboration at this level by sharing during the Forum are experience and are a concern and regional level no all fields of digital development will help us all in accelerating the implementation of SDGs. Thank you for our attention.
>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for sharing your effort, your insights and also your plan with us particularly in alignment with the SDGs.
We move to Japan.
>> JAPAN: Thank you.   Including e-commerce, e-learning and e-Health.   In the field of industry the digital technologies are being widely introduced not only in manufacturing industries but also in agriculture, construction and fisheries and various other services.   Moreover, the use of digital technology and data is being considered as tools that will play essential roles for serving climate change and other global issues.   ICT and digital technologies have become the Foundation of the social economy.   And digital infrastructure must be resilient, safe, secure and reliable while the full data must be free and trustworthy.
On the other hand, there are still nearly 3 billion people in the world who don't have connectivity.   We need to work together to create an environment where everyone, anywhere can connect to communication networks.   Japan in cooperation with the ITU launched a connect to recover project in October 2020 to strengthen digital infrastructure in countries with poor connectivity. For example, the ITU and UNICEF GIGA project supports the Internet for school project in Africa.
Human resources are essential for sustainably utilizing and maintaining the digital environment.   Based on this importance, Japan is promoting initiatives for capacity building in Developing Countries.   Technological progress is accelerating.   All countries should be able to benefit from these new technologies as soon as possible at an affordance price.   WSIS is playing a major role in helping ICT and digital technologies contribute more and more to the well-being of the world.
Thank you for attention.   Thank you.
>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.   Glad to hear from you.   And your experience and also your initiatives.
And this is indeed commendable.   Another remote presentation, and sorry please by 4:30 there is going to be a tea break here outside organized by the Chairman of WSIS.   You are all invited, please.
Then we move to Mongolia which is another remote presentation by the

Ministry of Digital development and communications.   You may wish to make the virtual presentation, please.

>> MONGOLIA: Thank you, Chair.   Thank you Excellencies.   It is my honor to be here and I'm so sorry that I couldn't be there physically.   But I heard all the presentations from all nations.   And it is very amazing to learn from their experiences.   So I will give you brief information about Mongolia and what we are doing in terms of digital development.   So for those who are not familiar with Mongolia, Mongolia is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world.   We have very big land.   We are sandwiched between Russia and China, two big nations in the world.   And we have 3.2 million population.   So for us, we don't have national satellite yet.   And it has been our challenge reach to our citizens.   We have fiber optic network to all 330 small towns in Mongolia.   And recently two years ago we launch the Mongolian platform.   We have about 660 Government services, more than a thousand local Government services available online.   We introduced digital I.D.   We introduced a lot of services that our citizens can get online.

In addition to that, we believe that one of the main Human Rights in the digitized world for citizens is to know the accuracy of their data and also have rights to own and monitor their data.   For this, we recently launched a system, notification system which allowed citizens to monitor their own data.   For example, if tax officer checks citizen's registration data or the place he was born, et cetera, et cetera, the citizen gets notified by e-Mongolia.   And if citizen thinks that that is not approved over that's not appropriate, they can file a complaint on the Mongolia platform.   So this is our way of ensuring the basic Human Rights in digital world.

For Mongolia we have done a lot of progress in terms of creating legal environment to promote digitalization.   Last year we have -- we have approved 4,000 including data privacies, cybersecurity and data sharing.   I'm very happy to inform you that I'm participating as a representative of the Ministry of Digital development and communications of Mongolia which is a newly established ministry and this expresses how much our Prime Minister and Government is paying attention to digitalization.   And now for e-Mongolia platform we have about 90% of our population using Government online platform on the daily basis.   One of the things that we are paying so much attention is cybersecurity issues.   So many of my colleagues who joined this Summit tackled the issue of cybersecurity.   For us, for ITU and for nations we need have a common standard and common language to ensure interoperability of cybersecurity between The Nations.

Thank you very much.   I will cut it short.   Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you Your Excellency.   Glad to hear your initiatives, particularly the brand new Ministry of Digital development and e-Mongolia platform.   I think it is approaching 11 p.m. in your own location.   Thank you very much.

We move to Nepal.   Secretary of Ministry of Communications and info

tech, His Excellency.

>> NEPAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, first of all I would like to thank the ITU for organizing this important meeting on the ICT and SDGs. Develop a comprehensive data Nepal and the theme that one country had sectors and digital initiatives to develop.

This covers all aspects of activities, carried out by both public and private sector as well as by individuals. Our Government programs are aligned to this framework. The plan, the development plan has given highest priority for the development of and to support the aim of the country to become middle income country by 2030 thereby achieving the SDGs. The sectors and identified in line with the SDGs, under which the broadband connectivity is being expanded nationally and it has reached 90% population. Digital payments are practiced in many business activities, e-governance system has been initiated. Many of our solutions are provided online and Government offices have started to apply the office automation system so that all the official functions run smoothly. The physical 2022-23 budget presented on 29 May, has announced to provide Internet services to communities and hospitals at subsidized rates to build a capacity from fiscal level.

Digital literacy campaign is initiated so that every user would be capacity to utilize the benefits of the digital system. I feel we are still way behind in fostering the joint partnership in establishing the sustainable connectivity. A common understanding and acknowledgement of the system adopted by member countries into need to be enhanced. In the global area have to be dealt jointly rather than in isolation and in a disjointed way. Collaboration is needed to strengthen the systems.

Further, the multi-stakeholder engagements and partnerships have to be encouraged in order to make it for all and for the in the society, country and the global level. I conclude here, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much for sharing your experience and your initiatives with us. Because of time constraints, I will move to the next one.

(Captioner signing off)

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