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>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. We're going to start this Session 5. My name is Pierre Mirlesse the high-level Moderator for this panel. Welcome to our panel. The topic is Bridging Digital Divide. So, first we'd like to have a few comments from Mr. Jaroslaw head of the ITU Office for Europe to give us some context.

JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. It's a great pleasure to welcome you to this session. Of course, this session is very close to our heart as the ITU, as you know, we have just finished in October, and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, which resolved to ask the ITU to focus on rolling out universal connectivity. We are still facing the challenge of having 2.7-billion people not connected or not using the Internet, and this is really a vast number of those who cannot benefit from the reach of the services provided via the digital platforms, and this is something that we need to change. To change this, we cannot work alone. This is the reason why this panel is also constituted by representatives of different stakeholder types. The strategies are key, and we have to work on them very strongly to make sure that the vast diversity of the technologies, those wired ones and also the reach of the wireless technologies, including those satellite ones can be used in order to accelerate or work on advancing universal connectivity.

Talking about this, of course, we need to take a look also at the universal connectivity from the angle of the

environment, and here under close collaboration with the regulators is of such a more most of the importance. Of course, those issues are discussed at the session on enabling environment this year in June where we're holding the Global Symposium for Regulators where 5G, satellite communication, and fiber connectivity will be in the core of the discussions of all over 175 regulators, as this is the number of those institutions which we have as of today worldwide.

So, thank you very much for giving us the floor at the beginning. We are strongly committed to support the work on the connectivity from different angles, from the angle of the standardization, from the angle of the radiocommunication and also from the angle of the development, and here we're talking about developing not only the infrastructure in the countries which need to catch up, but as talking about the countries which have the capacity to provide their know how and knowledge to avoid any of the kind of mistakes that can be undone with the wish of accelerating the rollout of the infrastructure at the country level.

Recently, just concluding, for us the importance is also this discussion on the rollout of the infrastructure, on the bridging the digital divide is relying on the proper dataset, on the knowledge that would exist in the country, and what doesn't. This is the reason why recently also we are working with so many partners on supporting the countries in sustaining the National Broadband Mapping Systems to make sure that the governments are aware of how to allocate and prioritize investment coming to the countries or internal investment, and how investment and direct them to the areas which are of the biggest need, or where economically it's not justifiable to make the investment.

We're looking forward to a great session and follow-up in terms of implementation.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you, Mr. Ponder. The first speaker comes from Burundi, Her Excellency Ms. Leocadie Ndacayisaba. From the Technology and Information, and strategies adopt by drun Burundi to bridge the digital divide and ensure inclusion. And what are the investments that are made.

>> LEOCADIE NDACAYISABA: Thank you for giving me the floor. The Government of Burundi through the Ministry in charge of ICTs has adopted a basic instrument in terms of ICT development policy. It is called the National ICT Development Policy, and it was adopted by the council of Ministers on 13 of July, 2011, and it is based on 10 strategic axes, two of which are aimed at reducing the digital divide. Namely, strategic axis number 3, which is the development of ICT infrastructures,

and the strategic axis number 7 which is based on rural connectivity and universal access.

Indeed, these two axes have enabled the deployment of broadband access infrastructure with a network covering most of Burundi. All the main towns in Burundi's 18 provinces are connected through many loops of metropolitan networks. With the support of the ITU, a broadband strategy has been developed, and validated by all Burundi stakeholders, and the process of adoption is underway. This strategy aims to provide broadband access to more than 80% of the Burundi population, including all socioeconomic sectors.

Turning to your second question, my answer is the following. Relating to the investments made to reduce the digital divide, I would say that now for almost 10 years, the Government of Burundi has invested heavily in projects and programs aiming to bridge the digital divide, as mentioned earlier, Broadband infrastructure has been deployed and recently a large-scale project called AFEN to lay the foundations for a digital economy based on last-mile infrastructure as begun.

So a project being that has recently began, indeed, and it is a very interesting project and should contribute to sustainable economic growth through long-term cost savings, efficiency and productivity gains, fueled by greater digital adoption by citizens, businesses, and the government.

Burundi the ICT sector is currently the second largest fiscal contributor with a penetration rate of 21% by the end of 2022. And component one of the project aims at digital inclusion and increased broadband access to rural communities, access to terminals, and this project will at least double the broadband penetration rate in addition to the net gain to the economy as a whole, resulting from increased access to affordable and quality Internet, the projecting is expected to mobilize private capital.

In view of the context and objectives of the project, this project will provide access to high-speed Internet and thus improve connectivity, especially for communities that are not or face barriers to Internet access. Burundi has also put in place a universal service fund since 2017, financed by telecom operators every year through contributions withheld from their turnover so that in return, consumers benefit from affordable communication services, especially, low income and rural people.

I'm almost finished. Thank you very much.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: I would like to ask the speakers to really keep tightly to the schedule. Second speaker excellency Mr. Jose Agustinho da Silva, Minister of Ministry of transport

and communication. What is the perspective on bridging the digital divide, and how do you tackle this issue in Timor-Leste?

>> JOSE AGUSTINHO DA SILVA: Thank you, Mr. moderator. We are bridging the digital twied as development issue, I mean an issue of climbing up the ladder of providing dig phi the life of our people, citizens, and residents. You'll notice the incidental tal divide is a significant that hinter the progress of the Philippine countries. The digital divide (?) those with access to information technology, such as Internet, computers, and smart phones, and those who do not.

Allow me to discuss the characteristics of differences between. Low income and those more specifically those low income do not have access to electricity in health care, law education attainment. While middle income effects to them. Given those to develop in milgt and income economy, bridging digital divides is development.

On to our second question, I think the general solution to the problem is well recognized already to bridge the digital divide, we must address both access and digital I will literacy. We need to ensure people have access to affordable Internet technology and also need to ensure they have the necessary skills to use them.

Therefore, bridging the digital divide is often best pursued throughout the steps that have government, multiseconder organizations and others in society. Others can play crucial role in investing in education and digital infrastructure. Education is essential because it provides people with the skills they need to use technology effectively.

Digital infrastructure such as fiber opt ebbing networks and improved reliability of Internet services in rural and remote areas. In that respect, for my responsibilities, we have been tackling the connectivity is this continuously with some progress achieved. To give you a feel, aggregate information of Timor-Leste has grown from 100 in 2012, to over 30 gigabyte per second this year. That is more than 2012, just 10 years apart.

This number will raise even more once we complete the construction of the first public-funded submarine cable system. I'm also pleased to inform you that we have had a -- international mobile service providers since 2012. The mobile networks operate in Timor-Leste 97% of the population areas since 2015. Already on social media platform from Instagram to Tik Tok using 4G data services accessible in municipalities a I cross the country. Meanwhile on digital literacy front for my part, we are working to connect all schools and health clinics by 2030. We will also be extending

20 gigabyte her second dedicated bandwidth on our public submarine cable system to the Timor-Leste, an education network in order to provide better Internet access to universities. There are also digital literacy programs for children and younger students arising awareness of safe Internet.

If conclusion, we see for bridging incidental tal divide as development, and by solving this issue we hope to bring to our people a better living standard. Thank you, your excellency.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you for your remarks. It's our privilege to welcome His Excellency Mr. fill nonMapulane. I have two questions for you, sir. The ee emergence of exacerbates the technology gap for developing countries, what interventions would you say South Africa is currently working on to address this big challenge? And second question is there is a need to develop a tech-satisfy savvy society and we have to close the digital divide and this is not the work any single entity can achieve alone. Are there any strategy ebbing initiatives that your country is doing to scale aggressively on digital?

>> PHILLEMON MAPULANE: Thank you, moderator. Greetings to all the panelists. South Africa's government response for addressing the digital divide is articulated through our national broadband policy of 2018, which is known as Connect through policy and programs which we secure 2.8-million over the next two years and rolling out across the country and to ensure Africans have access to the Internet by 2034. And this broadband policy is great component. Entails rollout of 33,000 community WiFi hot spot, the second involved community connectivity where the state would provide the way through various station across the country, and the ISP and mobile virtual network operators will provide the broadband services from the base station to approximately 5.8-million households.

The third aspect of this policy involved mobile network operators connecting the designated public facilities show and in June last year, we auctioned the spectrum to allow the operators to decongest the networks and deploy 5G or 4G networks across the country.

The release and license spectrum involved social obligations where we've agreed with the mobile operators to connect over 18,000 public schools, 6,000 health facilities, public libraries, and over 8,000 traditional authorities in the next 3 years.

In addition to the work that we're doing with this, the connect also published the next generation right of spectrum policy that advocates the presence of leave no one behind. In order to bridge the connectivity gaps and extend broadband

access, the policy and research of deployment of alternative networks, such as WiFi networks as an intervention to bridge the digital divide and assist in ensuring access to broadband infrastructure and high-speed Internet by all of its citizens, particularly in rural and poor communities.

With respect to your next question, we do recognize advancement of technology requires high-tech digital skills, and it's for this reason that we have developed digital and future skills strategy that recognizes the need for collaborations and partnerships. Some of the partnerships that we have include the joint collaboration and partnership with ITU, ILO, INDP to raise awareness of the importance ever training young people with job-related tasks. We have also partnership on digital for jobs and income with a German organize called GIZ., whose tar get is to increase women and girls access to relevant education and employment opportunities.

We also launched a digital intelligence, artificial intelligence institute of South Africa in partnership with the University of Johannesburg and University of technology in September 2023 as part of enhancing the partnerships that we have. I would like to thank you very much, Mr. Moderator. Thank you.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you for your remarks. Our next speaker comes from the Dominican Republic, Dr. Nelson de Jesus Arroya Perdomo i s INDOTEL. I have two questions for you. What measures of actions of the Government of Dominican Republic led by INDOTEL taken to promote the closing of digital divide, enabling Internet access in remote communities with low level of purchasing power.

The second question is from your point of view, what has made the difference beyond investment in infrastructure?

>> NELSON DE JESUS ARROYO PERDOMO: From my perspective, I understand that what has made the difference has been the willingness of the Dominican Government led by Lucia, to put people at the center of public policies and an example of these is an example of the decree 53920, the creation of the digital transformation cabinet and the liberation of the digital agenda 2030. Where we gave a lot of importance to the aspect of training people in digital skills, an example of what we do is called the Social Digital Basket Project, consisting of subsidized Internet services and smart phone for a period of 24 months to 2,000 households headed by women. All belongs to households in quality of life index 1 or 2, living in poverty age between 20 and 60 with basic school level, with at least one child in school, and living in municipalities with low concentration of Internet. This initiative seeks to ensure the

social and economic development and welfare of care of women heads of household in financially limited conditions who make up 40% of Dominican households.

For that purpose, we were inspired by the concept of significant connectivity that was promoted by the ITU and the Coalition for Affordable Internet which refers to regular use of the Internet, to provide an appropriate mobile device, enough data, and a connection with at least 4G.

As part of this project, these beneficiaries are receiving a gender-responsive digital skills training program so that they can develop themselves personally and professionally using digital technologies. These programs aim to enhance the social appropriation of digital technologies which these women, heads of households, and young students in order to expand the opportunities and have access to the labor market in a competitive way. Achieving human and social development for their own benefit, their families, and their communities. Thank you for this.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Our next speaker comes from Malaysia, it's our distinguished pleasure to welcome Ms. Bawani Selvaratnam, Chief Communication officer of multimedia communication. Two questions for you. What is Malaysia's priority for addressing the digital divide in your territory? And how does Malaysia promote digital adoption to equal economic and social uplift for everyone, and if you have any specific example, that would also be very helpful.

>> BAWANI SELVARATNAM: Thank you. Malaysia views the issue of the digital divide from three aspects, availability, accessibility. Availability of robust connectivity which improves connectivity and experience for all continues to be privatized through infrastructure initiatives under the National Digital Network Plan. As a result, as of December 2022, 4G coverage has reached 96.92% of populated areas, mobile broadband speed was at 116 mbbs and 7.7 million fiber networks out of 9 million targeted for 2025.

Moving on, phase 2 will focus on connecting the last 3% of the country in the next two years using suitable technologies. Accessibility is another key component and this is where affordability and access to devices come into play. Based on the measuring digital development, price 2021 report by ITU, the price of Internet service package, particularly mobile broadband package for Malaysia measured against the GNI was at 1.27% of GNI per capita.

The government recently pushed for and launched the unity package with cheaper rates for mobile and fixed broadband for the low-income group, senior citizens, differently abled groups, and Army veterans.

Between September 2022 and early March 2023, around 360,000 free devices have been distributed to students from low-income families attending institutions of higher learning with better connectivity and Internet accessibility, Malaysia continues to intensify efforts to spur adoption, to ensure that all Malaysia people are able to tap intoen opportunities afforded through incidental tallization.

The second question here is leveraging community touchpoints to spur digital adoption, and for this the digital economy centers known in Malaysia as Pedi, which are funded through the universal service provision fund, play an important role. For the past 15 years, Pedi has evolved from providing basic collective access to the Internet in underconserved areas and for underconserved communities to also now function as a center to catalyze digital economy, transformation amongst local communities.

To date there are 911 Pedis operating nationwide offering various initiatives for their surrounding community made possible by the strategic collaborations between multistakeholders. Local communities are able to participate in ICT training, at Pedi and for students between the ages of 5 to 19, e-learning programs on coding, programming skills, as well as English, mathematics, and science are also made available.

Through a strategic collaboration, an e-commerce platform provider in ASEAN a total of 22, 130 micro and small entrepreneurs are successfully on boarded to the e-commerce platform with sales generated in the amount of Malaysia 39.7 million which is about 8.8 million USD between 2021 and 2022. I share a success story, a homemaker from east coast started home-based business two years ago with business and marketing techniques learned from the e-commerce platform provided and facilitated through Pedi and she has managed to generate more than Malaysia money, 40,000 which is about USD 9,000 in sales within 6 months of go going digital selling local foods and beauty products. Thank you.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you. Thank you for sharing that last example which is the fruit of all the efforts that you achieved. Our next speaker comes from -- he's actually remote from Bosnia Herzegovina, Mr. Drasko Milinovic Communication Regulatory Agency, Director General, I hope you can hear us, sir? Can you hear us? Do we have Mr. Drasko Milinovic with us? Nope, doesn't seem to be here.

We'll move on, maybe he'll join us later. We'll move to the next speaker also remote from Brazil, Mr. Carlos Manuel Baigarri, are you there, sir? Mr. Carlos Manuel Baigarri? Okay. We established a connection.

>> CARLOS MANUEL BAIGORRI: Here I am. Good afternoon.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Mr. Carlos Manuel Baigarri.

>> CARLOS MANUEL BAIGORRI: Exactly. It's me.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Perfect. Welcome, sir. I'll introduce yourself or you can introduce your self in a second. President of National Telecommunication Agency, Anatel. I have two questions for you, sir. I don't know the political and regulatory commitments, brinl bridging the digital gap, suppose interventions in the market. Could you comment on your vision about that?

Second question I would have is once those areas are identified in the world of tight tight bunl et, how to get funding and is funding enough?

>> CARLOS MANUEL BAIGORRI: Thank you for your question and thank you for having me today to talk to you all. Regarding the first question. Firstly, I believe in competition as driver to expand the offer of service. The current Brazilian scenario shows that by applying asymmetric regulation new providers may bloom. It also touches the spectrum because the regulators should consider allocating bands to these new providers if technically feasible. Therefore, attention to spectrum allocation is a must, as well as you said, satellite as common benefit resource. That's only the first step. The regulator should identify areas where public policies are needed to connect the unconnected. And then for the second question regarding the funding, regulators must be creative. In Brazil, for example, we get the resources to the telecommunications infrastructure in the Amazon region to connect public schools and to cover highways by doing a 5G auction based on valued obligations and not in the revenue to the federal treasure.

To your last question, connectivity is not enough. We regulators are in a moment where we should work to provide meaningful connectivity. We must develop tools to help people to be productive once they are connected, access digital services and governmental services, and to be full citizens in the digital world.

Connectivity is not -- it's not enough at all. My last words are that bridging the digital gap might -- might be a joint work of regulators across borders. To get faster to our goals, we should share the best practices and decide wisely and collectively in the ITU about spectrum and orbits. Thank you very much.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you for your remarks. Thank you, sir. I'm told we have our speaker from Bosnia Herzegovina back online, Drasko Milinovic. Drasko, are you with us?

>> DRASKO MILINOVIC: Yes.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Okay. So introduce yourself and I'll ask you a couple of questions. You're Director-General of Communications for Regulatory Agency. The two questions I have for you is what are the current challenges in development of a digital society in Bosnia Herzegovina? The second question is what is the importance of international cooperation in reducing the digital divide?

>> DRASKO MILINOVIC: Dear ITU representatives, excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, it's my honor and pleasure to greet you all. Before I continue, let me congratulate the ITU and partners for organizing the World Summit of the Information Society, 2023 as a key platform for positioning the roll of information and communication technologies for the development of digital society and the realization of the goals set by 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you for your questions. In Bosnia Herzegovina, there still needs to be established proper legislation to foster broadband development. Spectrum policy and strategy need to be updated. There need to be adapted measures to reduce the costs of implementing the high-speed electronic communication networks.

Also, there is a need to establish public funds for high opinion speed broadband access. Therefore, proper goals need to be set as well as action plan for broadband implementation in the country.

About your second question, as an example of significant support, they provide to international cooperation. They may be stated ITU project dedicated Communication Regulatory Agency, and under the title of enabling environment for broadband mapping in Bosnia Herzegovina.

In order to overcome strategic and institutional shortcomings the agency applied for technical assistance from ITU. The objective of the project was to support efforts in Bosnia Herzegovina towards strengthening its broadband mapping operations to improve the deployment and uptick of connectivity throughout the Bosnia Herzegovina.

The project measures as an example of multistakeholder cooperation that proves as important for mobilizing and sharing expertise and support of achievement of connectivity for all as part of the Sustainable Development Agenda. That's it. That's short answers to your questions. Thank you.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you very much for your remarks. Our next speaker comes from Mexico. Carlos Gorostiza, are you there? Mr. Carlos Gorostiza. Hello, sir, can you hear us?

>> CARLOS GOROSTIZA: I hear it. Thank you very much.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: You're the undersecretariate of transport, you were talking about key experiences that Mexico is taking for the SDG. Can you explain what steps Mexico has taken to progress and attain those SDGs?

>> Car close GOROSTIZA: I would like to know if it's okay if I swish to Spanish?

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Of course, yes.

>> Carlos GOROSTIZA: Thank you very much. (no English translation).

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you very much. Our next speaker, Mr. Alexandre Fasel, I hope I pronounced your name correctly. You're the Special Representative for Science and Diplomacy. Would you please briefly share with us what is the vision for leveraging anticipatory science diplomacy to ensure the use of quantum computing for the SDGs? Quantum computing?

My second question is why should the diplomatic community care at all or engage?

>> ALEANDRE FASEL: Excuse me. I have two positions. I have also the representative of GESA Geneva science and anticipatory. A Swiss initiative operating in Geneva for the benefit of all the actors of local governance in Geneva and beyond.

Today I bring a perspective what we call anticipatory science diplomacy into the debate. If our ambition is that we solve the digital divide, and sustainably so, that we do away with it once and for good and that should be our ambition and it is, then truly we must also factor in and consider what the future drivers of digital gaps will be., and there, we quick low see quantum computing. Quantum computing will be incredibly powerful. In 20 or 25 years a normal fully functioning quantum computer will be as powerful as the most powerful super computer of the day to the power of X. Inimaginable.

Another way to express it is a complex problem that a normal quantum computer in 20 to 25 years will be able to solve in a few minutes or hours or days, say. The most potent super computer of the day, the size of the visible universe couldn't compute in a billion years. That's quantum computing.

There is a huge gap, a digital gap looming. We must sit up, take notice, and start working on it now. Two problems appear immediately. One is, who is going to get access to the quantum computer? The second is, what are we going to use the quantum computer for? It's so powerful that we have no clear idea how we're going to use it. The answer is clear. It must be accessible to all, but only to those states and corporations that have the means today to development, but to all. It must be used for the attainment of the Sustainable Development

Goals, and all the further agendas we will develop further on as an international community.

That's the kind much question GESA works on, based on anticipation that is radar that describes scientific breakthroughs in a perspective of 5, 10, 25 years, and then acceleration, accelerating the diplomatic debate where we bring everybody together in a multistakeholder approach in order to imagine what will the impact be of those science breakthroughs and technologies, and what are we going to do about it?

The solution, or an initiative we are developing is an open quantum institute that will bring here in Geneva together quantum providers and quantum users, in order to define together, who gets access, everybody, what for, SDGs and global problems. This is what we need to do. The problem is not only in 25 years, but we better start now because otherwise if we sit idol we'll be hit with the full force of the impact and be overwhelmed and we will have foregone the ability to capture and harness the power of technology for the global commons.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you. Alexandre, it looks like you have many topics to discuss with our next speaker, some commonalities. I'd like to welcome Ms. Jayne Stancavage remotely.

>> JAYNE STANCAVAGE: Thank you very much, and I'm very honored to be here with my fellow panelists, and I really appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts today, and I've been taking notes from some of the comments that have been made so far.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Welcome Jayne. Recently, this is not on the script, but I recently saw that Intel is named one of the most sustainable companies by Barrens, I don't know if you're going to talk about this. You're the Vice President for policy and regulatory affairs at Intel Corporation and I've got two questions for you. What are some important considerations about the digital divide and some mechanisms that maybe Intel can bring to help close it? And what role does Intel play in expanding connectivity and digital equity?

>> JAYNE STANCAVAGE: Thanks very much. In terms of the sustainability, I'm not talking about it today but it is something that my team works on I'd be happy to talk to you about it in the future.

But in terms of the questions for today, I'll be brief since I know that we're near the end of our session. First, one really important consideration for Internet connectivity is data throughput. The UN General Assembly and ITU Plenipotentiary Resolutions underline the importance of high-speed broadband connectivity to help bridge the digital divide. High-speed broadband is very important for schools and

households but can also facilitate success in many other areas of the economy and nail benefit from emerging technologies throughout our societies.

In terms of mechanisms, one important mechanism to help bridge the digital divide is the effective use of universal service funds, but as other financing mechanisms such as development banks to enable high-speed broadband connectivity, computer programs for schools, students and homes, as well as digital skill development programs.

And I note from Malaysia earlier, their program about the universal service funds for connectivity and computer programs for homes and students, and their plans through the initiative which I understand has been selected as one of the five project champions for WSIS prizes 2023, so congratulations.

I want to also mention spectrum allocation is an important mechanism to spur deploims and enable Internet connectivity. It's really important to allocate enough licensed and unlicensed frequency for high-speed broadband technology such as 5G and WiFi 6, and for example in Brazil, in 2021, they made low, mid, and high-band spectrum available for 5G and opened the entire 6 gigahertz band for license-exempt use. That enables us to spur some of the deployments that we need to bridge the digital divide.

And then in terms of Intel's role, first I want to recognize the important work at that many of my fellow panelists are doing as regulators to bridge the digital divide and enable digital equity. I'm speaking from the company perspective, from industry. We have more than 100,000 employees worldwide, shaping the future of computing and connectivity technologies. When I started at Intel more than 20 years ago, we were primarily known as Intel Inside, PCs, and servers. Today Intel silicon products power ICT networks and user devices such as computers, telecom networks, data centers, and the Cloud.

We play an important role from the network core all the way to the edge. We're a leading supplier of 5G infrastructure and WiFi chip sets. Intel also plays important roles in enabling emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity show and autonomous driving. Intel technical experts actively participate in the development of a wide array of technology standards underpinning the technologies we deploy today. In short, Intel plays a crucial role in developing and enabling the connect nolgs used by consumers, businesses, and governments globally, but we also support a wide variety of programs. For example, Intel is the leading company for the N50 project to accelerate incidental tal adoption and community enrichment for enabling the next 3-billion people to

participate in the digital world. Intel has a broad array of digital readiness programs such as artificial intelligence training for youth, the general public, current workforce and future workforce. Intel has digital readiness program for leaders, government leaders and public sector employees. We're looking at creating the technologies and also programs and projects that we're deploying. Thank you again for the opportunity. I'm very impressed by my fellow panelists in the work happening in the various countries around the world.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you very much for your remarks. I think we had a final remark that you wanted to make?

>> In October 2020 the Government of Dominican Republic. Decree 2020, high national interest the essential right of universal access to the latest generation of broadband Internet and productive use of information and communication technologies, ICTs, which instructed INDOTEL to elaborate a national broadband plan. The lines of action of the national broadband plan have been articulated with also the connectivity and access to the digital agenda 2030. As part of the set of actions within the framework of the national broadband plan, seeking tutorial unserved areas, promoting social cohesion and equal access for our citizens, INDOTEL is in the process of making the largest public investment in telecommunications infrastructure in the history of the country.

Through the project, improving connectivity for digital transformation, with an investment of over 80-million dollars which includes in the first phase, employment of fiber optic networks in 23 municipalities and 63 districts. This localities are mostly based in the southern region of the country. In the next phases, then we are currently working on, we will continue to promote the deployment of fiber optic networks in other locations that do not have any or where the deployment is concentrated in more than urban areas as well as supporting the deployment of mobile networks in locations without long-term evolution coverage. Connectivity for transformation project also has basic, intermediate, and advanced digital skills development component that seeks to provide different training to different population groups to help bridge the digital divide.

The Dominican State through INDOTEL and as indicated by the OECD in a recent report, bridging the digital divide, has focused on the design of projects to deploy meeting and last-mile access networks in the poorest communities that are not served or only partially served in areas of extreme poverty and difficult access, especially with satellite technologies and to connect the unconnected.

We are working to connect by the middle of next year the first 18 communities with small community networks, taking advantage of the obligations we have signed with satellite companies that have recently entered the Dominican market. Exploration has begun with a large traditional companies and cable TV providers, operating the national territory which are authorized to provide Internet to find possible innovative solutions to green connectivity to these destitute and isolate communities that also have the right to be connected.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you for the panel. Thank you very much to all the panelists. Looks like we can continue the discussion and best practices among all of us. Thank you very much.

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