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ITU
WSIS+20
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

JULY 9, 2025
SPOTLIGHT KEYNOTES
MALAYSIA
SAUDI ARABIA
SOUTH AFRICA

Session 533, 535, 537

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ROOM C
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>> HOST: Thank you, what an interesting discussion about the infrastructure. Big round of applause for the panelists. Thank you very much.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, it is now time to listen from our sponsors, our partners who have been guiding us through this process. And have made it possible that the WSIS Forum could be held at this scale and in such a great way that all of you have a platform to interact and be able to share your vision of WSIS beyond 2025.

I would like to please invite the production team to play the video of Malaysia, our partner for Platinum Partner this year for

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the WSIS+20 High-Level Event. Request you to please play the video of our Platinum Partner, Malaysia. Thank you very much.

(Music)

(Captioned video)

>> HOST: Thank you for this excellent video from Malaysia. Lot of work happening there on digital inclusion, digital partnerships. And we thank Malaysia for being a Platinum Partner of the WSIS+20 High-Level Event.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is our great pleasure to invite His Excellency, Mr. Ahmad Fahmi Mohamed Fadzil to the stage, Minister of Communications, Malaysia. Excellency, the floor is yours.

>> AHMAD FAHMI MOHAMED FADZIL: Thank you. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, bonjour. I am pleased to be here for the WSIS+20 High-Level Event. It is a digital shaping of the fairer, more inclusive and sustainable future.

Congratulations to the ITU on the 160th anniversary. Malaysia is proud to serve on the ITU Council and as the WSIS 2025 Platinum Partner.

Our contributions to WSIS continue to grow. In 2023, JENDELA won in Category 2. In 2024 our outreach Programme was named champion in Category 5. This refers to a village or settlement inhabited by the Indigenous People of peninsula Malaysia. This means village. This actually means original or aboriginal people and referred to the Indigenous People in Malaysia, which is distinct from other ethnic Groups.

This year, Malaysia was awarded in Category 4 and champion for the string ray project in Category 11. This reflects the digital inclusion as a right. Every Malaysian deserves opportunity and NADI serves 1.93 million users with Internet access, digital skills, e-health, e-Government services and targeted support.

Stingray 2 laid 46 kilometres of submarine cables, giving access to islanders, enabling e-health and e-MERS. Malaysia is an active player in ITU from Partner2Connect pledges to chairing Study Groups and hosting capacity building Programmes. Accordingly, we are seeking reelection to the ITU Council for the period of 2027-2030. The goal is clear, build a more connected, informed, inclusive Global society. We reaffirm our full commitment to work with partners to scale digital inclusion, strengthen resilience and ensure no one is left behind in this digital era. Thank you, congratulations again to the ITU for its leadership and vision. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> HOST: Thank you, Excellency for your leadership and vision in guiding us through the various challenges and visions we had for the WSIS+20 High-Level Event. Thank you very much. We would like to invite our strategic partner gold, Saudi Arabia. We would like to

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invite His Excellency who is the acting Governor and Vice-Minister of the space and technology Commission, Ministry of Communications and information technology Saudi Arabia. Excellency, we invite you to the stage.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, welcome and good morning. First of all, I would like to congratulate ITU on 160 years of leading the Digital Transformation globally. This year, marks a historic milestone, two decades since the World Summit on the Information Society is first envisioned the Global inclusive digitally empowered future. Today we stand at the threshold of the WSIS+20 Review by the United Nations General Assembly. This Forum offers a critical opportunity to reflect, recalibrate and renew our shared commitment to our people-centric Digital Transformation.

Over the people 20 years, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made strides in translating the WSIS vision into reality guided by Vision 2030 of Saudi Arabia. And an unwavering whole of Government approach. We have systematically advanced across all 11 WSIS Action Lines.

Our full 20-year National report is available via the QR code displayed in front of you.

Allow me to take a brief moment to share key highlights. In 2024, our digital economy represented 150 billion. Representing 15% of the National GDP and 50% of the Regional digital economy. Saudi Arabia was recently ranked first globally in the ICT development Index by the ITU. A proud statement of the depth, resilience and maturity of the digital ecosystem.

Today, 100% of the population is connected online, unlocking equitable access to education, healthcare and public service. Our digital workforce has expanded over 150% over the past seven years, from 150,000 in 2018 to 180,000 last year.

Over 170,000 individuals have been trained in future critical skills such as AI, Cloud computing and Cybersecurity. Our digital Regulator academy is a Global Knowledge Hub trained many from it over 100 countries.

Notably women participation in the ITU Sector has soared over the past seven years.

And platforms such as azure offer seamless access to over 150 Government services and driving cost savings. A sample of the more than 5200 digital services in Saudi Arabia.

In healthcare, the virtual hospital, the world's largest, interconnected 170 hospitals setting new benchmarks in remote care through technology.

In 2024, Saudi Arabia proudly ranked sixth globally in the UN e-development Index underscoring the citizen centric Digital Transformation. Despite our collective gains, critical challenges persist. Digital divides and emerging technologies such as AI

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threaten a widening Global inequalities. Cyber threats and disinformation continue to erode trust and instability. The complexity demand the response. The WSIS framework remains as relevant as ever. The powerful blueprint for an inclusive, secure and sustainable digital future.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is honoured to remain a steadfast partner in this journey, through our continued sponsorship of the WSIS Forum, we reaffirm deep commitment to the multistakeholder approach. We look forward to contributing actively in the WSIS+20 Review, ensuring it is a springboard for transforming Global digital cooperation.

We are also proud to host the GSR in Riyadh from August 31 to September 3, to shape policy and innovation for a sustainable digital era. We warmly invite all stakeholders to join us there.

Let us build this legacy together. Thank you very much.

>> HOST: Thank you, Excellency. Thank you to Saudi Arabia for being such a close partner of the WSIS process especially the Forum since its inception. Thank you very much. We would like to invite the Chair of the WSIS+20 High-Level Event and our gold sponsor, South Africa Excellency, Mr. Solly. The floor is yours.

>> SOUTH AFRICA: The world joined forces to have a shared vision, to build a people-centred, inclusive oriented Information Society. In many ways we made meaningful progress but not yet have done enough. Billions remain not connected. Ideas flow freely across borders and digital tools continue to transform education, health, commerce and Government.

But at the same time, billions remain unconnected and we also know that connectivity alone is not enough.

We need a digital society that works for everyone and that means inclusion, trust and opportunity. With our assumption of the presidency, we have adopted the theme of solidarity, equality and sustainability. This is reflected in our work in the digital economy Working Group where our Agenda is focused on connectivity for inclusive development, digital public infrastructure and transformation. Digital public ecosystems and equitable inclusive and just artificial intelligence.

In South Africa, we believe the real power of Digital Transformation lies not just in technology, it lies in what it unlocks for people. A child in a remote area learning online for the first time a small business accepting digital payments. A farmer using data to increase crop yields. These are not just tech stories. They're human stories. They're not yet everywhere, but they can be and in fact they must be. But we also know that there are risks. That is why our digital strategy is rooted in the following values. Openness, fairness, dignity.

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We have legislation to protect personal data. We are committed to strengthening Cybersecurity and we are investing in local skills, supporting small innovators and building digital public infrastructure to create a more open and participatory digital economy. We are pushing ourselves to ask harder questions about the ethics of AI, the design of algorithms, and the need to use data responsibly.

Because if we truly want to build trust, we need to lead with purpose and not just code. The WSIS+20 process shows us what is possible when we pursue collaboration that complements health, inclusive competition and when we choose inclusion over isolation, we can focus on long-term impact rather than short-term gains. Thank you so much.

>> HOST: Thank you, Excellency. We would like to thank South Africa for working with us hand in hand in ensuring that we are able to deliver such a great WSIS+20 High-Level Event. We would like to now invite our sponsors on stage for a photograph with our Secretary-General Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, UAE, Saudi, Malaysia, South Africa, if you can please join us on stage. Thank you very much.

>> HOST: Thank you so much. Without you, WSIS+20 wouldn't be possible.

(Concluded)

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