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SECOND EUROPEAN DIGITAL YOUTH JAM: TOWARDS THE GENERATION
CONNECT GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT

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>> CELIA FALCON: Good morning. Welcome to Second European Digital Youth Jam: Towards the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit. We're excited to have you -- to have all of you here again. We're doing this event which is create created for youth by youth, the team has worked hard to make this event happen. We are going to discuss about meaningful youth engagement for the digital future, quality education also towards our youth for the digital future and finally, Gender Equality in the STEM and technological and IT field.

I want to welcome Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder who will start with the opening remarks, and I really hope you all enjoy the event and thank you for the effort for making that happen.

Jaroslaw Ponder, the floor is yours.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, and good morning to everyone.

It is my great pleasure to welcome with us the Deputy

Minister of Transport and Communications of Republic of Lithuania that took time to be this morning with us, and we'll hear today also the messages from the leaders from Europe and representing not only their countries but the European structures.

On behalf of the ITU, It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you at the second digital Youth Jam. There is no doubt that youth engagement is important -- an important element for the future of the digital space and we're pleased, therefore, that the ITU membership agreed in 2022 and the ITU strategy, that became a reference point in the implementation and ensuring that we can empower, engage and ensure a participation of the youth in the world of ITU and beyond.

Of course, at the regional level, Europe, we're very much proud that we're able to create the Generation Connect Europe Youth Group consisting of 48 young leaders, young envoys working day and night to make sure that these engagements really means something and brings the real results. They're coming from 21 countries, so bringing different experience, different backgrounds, but one that unites them is the passion to the digital and this is something that's very special for you. The declaration which they have elaborated last year, it serves as an input document to several U.N. meetings and several processes. And we hope in the future updated version of this document will be for the European leaders and also going beyond.

Thank you very much to all envoys for such a strong engagement. We're very proud of you. We're looking forward to the future, and your aspirations to engage the other European leaders designing digital future, and so let me use this opportunity to express the call to them to make sure that they are also supporting our European Youth Envoy so hardly working on the engagement and empowerment.

This journey is going beyond the boundaries of Europe. This meeting, for example, it is contributing to the SDG process, to the WSIS process, to the European Year of Youth Engagement, as well as to the Generation Connect Initiative which unites all regions, all youths from all over the world to make sure that the voice is heard. We hope that the results of this meeting will be feeding into the preparations for the Generation Connect Summit that will be held in Rwanda from 2nd to 4th of June, and we hope those who will be able to join, that they will enjoy the time and productivity, contribute to the cocreation process and those who are not able to join will join remotely, creating and engaging others equally passionate around digital.

So ladies and gentlemen, one more time, thank you very much for joining, let me thank our CEPT, the regional Commission, as to the leaders who are today with us, in particular, Deputy Minister of Lithuania, as well as member of the parliament of Romania who is also the Chairman of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference to be held shortly.

With this, I thank you very much and I'm handing over the floor to her ex her excellence Agne Vaiciukeviciute -- my apologies for the pronunciation. We're so happy to have you. Over to you.

>> AGNE VAICIUKEVICIUTE: Jaroslaw Ponder, the pronunciation was perfect! Greetings to everyone from Lithuania.

As the deputy of Minister of transport and communications of Lithuania, it is my pleasure to congratulate all European Youth Envoys for the excellent job they have done organizing this special European digital Youth Jam. This is an excellent example of activity organized by youth for youth showing the need for such platforms to exchange, brainstorm and act on digital policy. Youth engagement is essential for building a digital future for the next generations. Myself, I'm coming from the country where over 99% of youth age from 15 to 24 had Internet users, but this is obviously not the case elsewhere. In many countries still many youth suffer from lack of connectivity, affordability and digital skills. Therefore, I'm looking forward to the outcomes of this discussions that will contribute to the Generation Connect youth Summit that will be held from 2 to 4th of June in Rwanda and the proceedings of the European Year of Youth, especially the year providing a lot of opportunities for young people and the processes that might benefit from their inputs.

It is crucial that young generations like those of you attending this event are part of the processes that design the digital future. So take action, be part of Generation Connect. Me, myself, I'm coming from very strong youth organization background as well. I really truly believe in the power of youth working together with youth and creating these policies and generations. In the near future you will be the ones who will work and give those speeches like I'm doing right now and implementing the policies in your countries. Congratulations to the event, to all of the organizations and organizers who are supporting it and have a fruitful conversation today.

Thank you.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Her

Excellency for your remarks.

I hand over to Celia for further moderation and also special remarks from the representative of Romania and the Chairman of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference.

Over to you, Celia and we'll go ahead with the message.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you, Jaroslaw Ponder. Thank you very much, Agne Vaiciukeviciute. I will now share the video of Mr. Sabin Sarmas, Chairman of the Plenipotentiary Conference, as you said.

>> SABIN SARMAS: I'm the designated Chairman of the Plenipotentiary Conference, and it is my pleasure to greet all European Youth Ambassadors of the European Digital Youth Jam. Organized by youth for youth I think this event is an example of meaningful engagement of youth in digital policymaking process.

This year is very particular for your region, as we all know 2022 was declared as the European Year of Youth providing several opportunities for young persons to cocreate, advocate, contribute to the policymaking process, shaping the future and this includes digital.

Year 2022, it is also an important year for global digital community, there is no doubt that the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit to be held from 2 to 4, June in Rwanda will be a platform for proactive engagement in preparation of the declaration and the Plan of Action that I hope to be resonated at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference. In this context, please let me already congratulate European Youth Envoys for proactive engagement in this process, and encourage all of them to continue and others to join this effort. It is important that all of you are part of the process that design the digital future.

I encourage you to become part of Generation Connect.

>> CELIA FALCON: Now we'll be seeing also the message for the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education, Youth and Support talking the European Year of Youth.

Mariya.

>> MARIYA GABRIEL: Welcome to the European Year of Youth. This is the year of hope, a year dedicated to our young people, one that brings new opportunities, new connections, new friendship, a year to speak, to listen, to be heard, to participate and to engage.

The young are those that can shape the future of Europe. We need to listen to you, our young Europeans, because you are the ones who can change our perception of what is possible. You are the spirit of Europe's next

generation. Dear young people, this is your year, be bold, be ambitious, and think out of the box and most of all, enjoy!

>> CELIA FALCON: So I think that after these great opening remarks from Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder, from Her Excellency Agne Vaiciukeviciute and the videos from Mr. Sabin Sarmas and Ms. Mariya, and we know how much the high-level politicians and high-level stakeholders trust youth and how much our voice is valuable.

I hope that we enjoy this event. We continue to create this important message for stakeholders to hear it and take well note of it.

I want to thank you all for the opening remarks.

Next we will start with the first session. This is a discussion between four young leaders of the topic of building meaningful youth engagement in policy and strategy making.

I would like to introduce the moderator of the session, Andreea Barbu, a Europe Youth Envoy for over a year. The floor is yours.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Greetings, Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our first session of today's meeting.

We are joined by four amazing young people, two women and two men, who are changing the world, making history.

And it is my great honor to introduce Mr. Ivan Martinovic, who is a HHD student and researcher of AI in medicine. Welcome.

>> CELIA FALCON: I would like to interrupt -- I'm so sorry -- to take a group picture. I just forgot it. I'm so sorry.

If everyone could turn on their camera, we'll take an initial group photo. Thank you very much.

My apologies, now, the floor is all yours.

>> IVAN MARTINOVIC: Thank you, first of all.

I would like to greet all of the participants of the meeting and it gives me great pleasure to meet you today.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: You work in one of the most important fields of our time with the potential of shaping our future in everyday life which is artificial intelligence. As a young leader, researching AI in medicine, you have firsthand insights on who creates our future. It has been mostly made up by white men, so not so much young people coming from diverse backgrounds. Can you tell us about that?

>> IVAN MARTINOVIC: Yes. Thank you for the questions.

You are absolutely right when you say that artificial intelligence has the potential of shaping our future in

every area of life. As you mentioned, I'm researching application of artificial intelligence in medicine with focus on applications artificial intelligence in medical imaging. When I speak about artificial intelligence, I always emphasize that artificial intelligence is a tool, not a trade. In my research, artificial intelligence is a tool in a few hands and my final goal is to improve healthcare and enable all people to make timely diagnosis in order to save many lives. I choose to work in science, among other things, because in science it is not important people's background, skin color, nationality, other irrelevant things. If you want to succeed in science, you must work on yourself and be persistent.

Also, I like to make a comparison between football and science. You know in, football competitions, we distinguish several ranks, for example, national groups or world cup, in science, we don't have such divisions. If you choose to work in science, you are immediately on the world market. When the results are compared to all other world scientists. I think science is maybe one of the cleanest things in the world, however why do some people use science achievement in the wrong way? This is a special topic which is not on the agenda today.

The question, who creates our future technology, in the past, this activity has been reserved for a home genius group of mostly white men. Today I think the situation is different. Based on my experience the idea is most important, and not from whom it comes. Bringing the ideas to light has been facilitated through the development of start-ups, start-ups are often linked with the Rights of Silicon Valley.

These technology companies around Stanford University has a huge impact on the technological development of the world. If we look at the American major technology companies like Facebook, Twitter, none of them existed 20 years ago, even Google was founded only 24 years ago. All of these companies started as start-ups. Many countries have recognized the importance of start-ups and adapted policies in order to stimulate their establishment. Today young people with diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to create our future technology. I encourage young people to come up with today's ideas and not give up on them so easy. Keep in mind that most major technology companies started out of the garage. We have the opportunity to take matters in our own hands and make the world a better place.

Let's raise our voice for a better future. I hope that I will do this by personal example.

Thank you.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: In medicine, you have to be resilient, I like that statement. You have been very inspiring.

The final question to you, what's the problem when one homogeneous group of people makes decisions for all when decision making processes exclude many voices? What is your opinion?

>> IVAN MARTINOVIC: Thank you.

Your question is multilayered. The first part, with reference to one homogenous group of people who make decisions for all, I would direct that in the direction of democracy. The democracy -- the idea of democracy shares the ideas of all great ideas, the result is often the metaphorical wind of history has changed direction and is blowing in only in one direction, in the direction of democracy.

The question what is democracy is not rhetorical, Abraham Lincoln said that the word never had a well-defined word for freedom, the same can be said for the word democracy. When we talk about countries that had a democratic system, representative of democracy is represented in most of them, which is based on the idea that the number -- that a number of elected representatives decide on behalf of the citizens. However, the representative democracy, it is more frequent especially at the expense of the fact that this type of organization encourages the creation of distance between citizens and democratic structures leaving voting in elections as the only opportunity to influence processes and at the same time, citizen participation in decision making process is one of the basic preconditions for a democratic society.

Achieving full citizen participation in the decision making process is a serious challenge for more experienced democratic practices as well. One of the challenges is the complex nature of participations in the sense that it is a two-way process.

The success of participation depends equally on citizens and government representatives in order to ensure greater participation it is necessary to motivate citizens to get involved in the decision making processes. But it is equally necessary to motivate institutions to involve citizens by providing conditions for the participation of citizens in decision making process without obliging the institutions to actually consider their proposal to provide quality feedback and without respecting the recommendations, the result was not achieved.

The participations of youth people in decision making process should be a key goal for all democratic societies. Recently there has been a lot of talk about youth participation and the importance of its active promotion. We are witnessing that young people and citizens in general are not too motivated to participate in the decision making processes, hence the need for more and more frequent activities that promote youth participation.

I hope that today's event will motivate them to get involved in decision making processes, informing youth is something that is often skipped when it comes to participation and it is one of the basic preconditions for quality and purposeful participation. To participate, youth people must be informed. In the first place, they must be informed about the way in which they can be involved in decision making processes. Therefore, establishing participation mechanism without the promotion does not make sense. In addition when government structures want to inform young people in a timely, quality manner about what is happening in communities they must take care of how they do it. They need to be informed through the means which they're used. Today they are mostly social networks.

The conclusion is that decision making process should not exclude many voices, especially those of the youth.

Thank you.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Thank you. Thank you for reminding us that by voting the youth can get involved in the decision making.

And following on that note, I would like to introduce our two ladies, Ms. Veronica Piccolo, who is Chair at the Youth Standing Group, and as well Ms. Luisa Franco Machado, Fellow at the Digital Internet Governance.

Hello, ladies. Welcome.

>> VERONICA PICCOLO: Good morning.

>> LUISA FRANCO MACHADO: Hi.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: I would like to start with Ms. Veronica Piccolo, I have a special question for her.

As Chair of the youth SGI of Internet Society you have extensive experience in engaging the voices of youth in policymaking processes. In your experience, what is the main thing that needs to happen and the level of policy decision makers to make sure that the voices of youth are actually heard and that the meaningful bridge is created between the two of them?

>> VERONICA PICCOLO: Thank you for the question.

It is actually a very complex question regardless of

what we can say here, it is important that we bridge from both sides. It is not always -- (poor audio quality).

Let me stress how important this year is for all of us, for all stakeholders in this European Year of the Youth, and this is the chance that's been given to us speak up and to actually make our voices heard. This is much more important because some stakeholder, especially Internet governance, they don't even know there are youth initiatives and because -- this is because by tee fault they're not used to engage with people with little to no experience. Those are mainly stakeholders from governments and private sector and they use a more top-down approach in decision making. It is not their fault. It is their modus operandi to engage mainly with senior experts, and not only that, no absolute company does that, in the private sector, but for experience I know that some companies, big companies, big tech company, like, for example, Google and Amazon, they're involved in a youth empowerment programme in partnership with ISOC, for example.

If we see other kind of stakeholders from Civil Society, for example, and the technical community, they use a more community engaging approach into their decision making. If you think, for example, I don't know about ITU, but ICANN, others use a community engagement, bottom-up approach, so they use this engagement with young people and it is in their modus operandi.

If we look at the big picture, 50% of the stakeholder groups, government, private sector, they use a top-down approach and it is very difficult from us to, you know, create this bridge with them.

This is a huge problem if you think governments dictate Internet regulations and the private sector is also the one driving the market. Now, as an individual I cannot tell you what they should do. I can tell you what's been done last year during the IGF, the IGF Katowice, we had a chance to participate in a private roundtable with some European parliamentarians coming from Estonia, Denmark, Czech Republic and there was also an expert policymaking from the European Parliament. We had a very informal meeting with no recording, with no agenda. We had a chance to do this roundtable, exchange view on the proposed DMA, DSA, the Artificial Intelligence Act, and I felt that the European parliamentarians had the feeling, they were really hoping to listen to our inputs in that sense. This is hopefully something that can be replicated in the future. We have to be weary of one thing, that when it comes to policymaking, we're talking about high-level engagement so

you have to be experts, young experts in certain fields in order to contribute meaningfully in policy drafting.

>> Celia falcon: She has lost her connection. Maybe we can go to the next speaker and wait if the connection goes back.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Absolutely. Yes.

We'll turn now to Ms. Luisa Franco Machado and your CV is incredible, you're currently a graduate consultant at the National Development of Colombia and you have been a researcher at the Institute of Internet and Just Society on Big Data Ethics and an advisor to public transportation and just to mention a few of your achievements, but the list is very long.

As a young person with such an impressive track record in engaging in tech-related policy and strategy, what would be your advice for youth who would be interested in following your path?

>> LUISA FRANCO MACHADO: Well, thank you so much. Very good talking.

Thank you so much, everyone. It is really nice to be here. I see some faces that I already know, including Veronica. Meeting new people, it is always great to connect.

Yeah, let's dig right in.

I think first of all, disclaimer, most of my experiences are in public policy, so this is the area where most of my example also come from. You know, to answer the question, we often talk about making young people's voices heard. We have heard a lot about this, we say this a lot, but you know we have to ask ourselves what exactly is our role as young people to speak up? You know, when policymakers design interventions and assessment impact on society as a whole, I think us young people, we have this really crucial power in bridging the gap between the analogue and the modern, but not just because we're young, you know, because we also have the tools to do so, and we have to leverage this knowledge and most importantly, to advocate for it.

You know, I often see projects that include the youth in Digital Transformation, and I mean, we have heard even in the panel a couple of times the youth building systems for the youth, and even though that's great, I think there is still something missing which is, no, the youth should be building systems for everyone because other people are building systems for everyone, including us. Why wouldn't we be able to do so? I think this is the point where we can and should intervene. For example, I'm a youth fellow

at the EuroDIG, the European dialogue on Internet governance, and, you know, as we have seen, last year, we built really powerful mission statements directed to European leaders that tackle not just the inclusion of young people in Digital Transformation, but also addressing this information, digital self-determination, digital governance, data privacy, so on. You know, for me, what is striking, is that it is not just about inclusion because that takes agency away from us, it is about embracing meaningful leadership, my advice I think is to find what you can bring to the table and how your experiences as a young person contributed to that and be loud about it, especially if you're a young women like me, don't be afraid to share, to speak up, to post, even if you think it is cringe or if you think your opinion is worthless, because I think occupying all spaces, not just the spaces designed for us is really the first step when generating meaningful change.

And to wrap it up, I remember a few years ago I went to the Internet Governance Forum in Berlin. I sat in the conference about ICTs for development and I swear I could count on my hand the number of women in the room and in the panel together, and I was probably the only person below 40 in this panel and I was 20 at the time. You know, there were people there that thought that I was one of the speaker's daughters because, of course, what else could a clueless girl be doing there alone if not watching my dad speak, right? So I think about that every time I'm afraid of speaking up, applying for a job, anything, because if we don't believe in ourself, no one else will. Once you believe in yourself, it is easier to say hey, I have some interesting things to say, and I hope you'll listen to it, because if you don't, you'll be missing out on a lot. That. would be my advice.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Thank you for sharing that story. You're absolutely right.

It is true, in the YouthDIG I took part of, we had a lot of great statements and progress, I see Ms. Veronica Piccolo is back with the connection. I want to ask her one more question related to what Luisa Franco Machado has been saying about youth being heard.

Ms. Veronica Piccolo, what can youth do to make sure that its voices are not just heard, but listened to and truly influencing the decisions of our generation and the decisions that will affect our generation.

>> VERONICA PICCOLO: Apologize from my connection, I'm currently running on hot spots because I'm always lacking

in these cases! My wi-fi doesn't work! I hope that you can hear me fine now and it is not breaking up.

So back to the question, I think that as Luisa Franco Machado was saying, if we want to influence decisions, we must take part in the discussion forum and policymaking processes. We have to have -- we must show up in those forums, in those discussion forums and ask people to hear from us. We have to do that on equal footing with other stakeholders, but somehow young people, there is a huge barrier when it comes from convincing senior stakeholders to consider our viewpoint, it is because young people in their opinion, they are not seen as legitimate stakeholders because according to today, we're not bearers of common specific interests because we don't have according to them appropriate capacity to work on policy draft or because they think we have little to no experience in a given field, sometimes because the vision of young people is not socially and geographically consistent across Europe and let alone across the globe.

For example, an average teenager coming from southern Italy can have a completely different interest than a teenager coming from the Netherlands, for example. We all know in this room that this is not true because many of us have -- make a huge impact in the past, and there are young experts in very specific fields and in a very advanced field of the Internet and what we have to do also in this case, is try to leverage the core value that brings us together. For example, the young people joining an Internet Society youth study group, they believe that Internet has certain properties and that it is open, decentralized, accessible, general purpose, neutral and reliable. And we have a duty to keep it that way.

Anything that comes close to jeopardize the Internet as we know, as we value, manically from government regulations and business model of certain company, they boost our ability to act. What do we do to adapt to change and advocacy efforts of young people according to the stakeholder group we wish to address?

If young people wish to have a say in Internet regulation or public policy, they have to address parliaments and governmental agencies and therefore they have to learn how to carry out an Internet impact assessment to actually write or contribute to a policy draft.

The second, that option, it is to take advantage of the Internet governance and analyze in general in that environment, you have the chance of your life to meet

people who have the power to make decisions and somehow they come there to find solutions. We can advocate for cross generational panels like that of Luisa for a roundtable with parliamentarians or real representatives of public agency.

Besides there, you make them a part of the parliaments in the corridor and you have to be ready, you had to be ready to say something meaningful and try to refrain from statements -- they're extremely busy people.

So you cannot expect -- you cannot expect them to take you seriously if you go and say something like let's do something for cyberbullying, please force inclusivity in the digital sphere. You have to be very specific, you have to be bold. You have to share your experience because you are the main users of the Internet, you live basically since you have memory in the digital spheres so you have to share your experience as users but also as a young expert.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Thank you very much, Veronica Piccolo.

I now welcome Mr. Aleksandar Karoos. Welcome. Can you hear us? Welcome.

>> ALEKSADAR KARATOSHA: Hello, Andreea. It is a pleasure to address you.

I'm very happy to hear the other speakers say what they wanted to say as well. So we agree a lot on many points.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: I'm glad to hear it, that we're on the same page.

For the audience to get to know you a little bit, you're the young European Ambassador for the Western Balkans and the President of Youth Empowerment Association, and therefore you are heavily involved in youth engagement on the daily.

What does meaningful youth engagement look like to you?

>> ALEKSADAR KARATOSHA: I agree, we have the same thing, that the young people should be really listened to, not just invited to be heard in a room and in the Western Balkans, representing that region, the politicians have a bad habit of just inviting young people for photo shoots, for publicity stunts in order to say that young people are with us because it is a popular thing in the E.U. and they want to, you know, show that they're progressive politicians. The final result is that they're not really implementing the ideas and suggestions that the young people are giving.

I believe, we strongly believe that the young people

have proven many times that they deserve to be a part of this processes, and they are very good in giving ideas and they're very smart and critical in all of the ideas that are given. We have some world leaders that have shown that we have potential to change the world and to do something great. We see now that we maybe a few years ago, a decade ago, politician high school the freedom to choose if they want to address our needs or challenges or not. Now we see they must do that because we're facing a very big issue with brain drain, we have a lot of young people that are leaving our countries, our communities, so they're going to Europe because there are much better opportunities, much better conditions and jobs so basically we see that the politicians are not concerned because without the young people, without the people in your country, you cannot -- you cannot rule anything, basically the health wouldn't be as good as it is, the law system, the benches have difficulty to be given out. So basically brain drain, it a big issue for the region and politicians are starting to get that more and more.

Also youth engagement in Civil Society organizations, it is really important, as much as important as the policy involvement because as an active volunteer, as a member, as a leader in our organization with some position in it, you gain crucial skills that are important for both personal and professional development and they can help you in a way to accelerate your career. I would also like to mention here, I think it is really important, the layer of participation, there is a theory made in the previous interactions actually where the author says that there are eight steps to youth or he says child participation because then it wasn't that famous -- it wasn't the young people defined as a special category, more children, it applies to young people as well. There are eight steps, divided into phases, so basically the first phase is non-participation. The first three steps are in the non-participation and there is a declaration -- the first space, manipulation. So where the young people in a way are manipulated to represent something that the organization or the party wants in a way compares the example of children wearing some t-shirts or some banners on a protest in a meeting where they say something or the media portrays them to say something which they don't really understand.

In a way, the children, the young people, they're manipulated to say something, words they don't really understand or they don't know as well.

The next step, the decoration, where the young people

are invited to do a dance performance, to do fun activities, but in a way to promote somebody's ideas, somebody's let's say background so, here again, the young people are not aware what's happening and they are maybe there for fun reasons, to get with their friends, to get refreshments, they give this example in a theory.

After that, there is tokenism, where young people are invited to the panel discussions with the serious topics and institutions but they're very well prepared, they're carefully chosen who goes, so they're smart young people, but they are portraying a message that the other people want to portray. They're not portraying the view of the young people, they're not consulting the young people, basically they're just let's say on a megaphone of the political parties of the organization, of somebody that wants to convey a message.

So he gives these three steps as non-participation and as a way, young people are used in a sense.

After that, all of the next five steps are in the level of participation and there are various degree, starting with the assigned but informed means that the young people are assigned by the grown-ups, let's say, but are informed what have they're doing. So they're not manipulated, not used in anyway, they know what they're doing. This is a step forward and that's why he considers this as participation, they understand what they're doing. The next step is consulted and informed. Basically they're also consulted, what happens, their opinions are heard, and in a way, the organizers can implement the opinions if they think that they're good enough.

The next step, it is adult initiated but shared decision with young people, this is much bigger step where adults again, the policymakers, they're inviting the young people to the table and they're in a way giving them The Rights to make a decision with them.

Young people are contributing to it and in a way, they give their say into the matter.

The next step, it would be youth initiated and directed. This is most of the Civil Society organizations I have been a part in. Basically young people are the engine of the idea, of the project, they're pushing everything through the idea, basically they're doing everything and they're directing it.

So they do what they want without consultation from other sides, from other stakeholders.

The last step, the highest step of participation, it is youth initiated but shared decisions with adults. So

basically youth should be the engine of the policies of the projects that are of interest to them, for the young people, but the decisions should be shared with the adults. There were a lot of critics why the 7th step is not the last one, youth initiated and directed, he says young people should not be seen as somebody oppressed, could be liberated from the adults, not say the grown-ups, but they should be a valuable stakeholder in the whole process, like to give their perspectives, ideas, to contribute as much as they can, and in a way to use their potential because young people have a lot of potential.

I agree with this theory because I have passed through the phases myself, I believe that meaningful youth engagement is from the first step onwards, when you really engage in the process and you know what you're doing, you're not being manipulated, not doing somebody's agenda, but basically you're doing something that is meaningful for the young people. I would say that that is truly what meaningful youth engagement is for me.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Thank you for reminding us of the ladder of participation and the different levels of power dynamics.

How can we counter this power of dynamics and build a truly global, inclusive, solidarity-driven youth movement? So uniformizing everyone from the ladders of participation he was mentioning before?

>> LUISA FRANCO MACHADO: Well, I think my opinion, the reality is acknowledging our differences and embracing intersectionality. Me and many other young people, activists, you know, working in Internet governance around the world, we usually converge in advocating for more inclusive, holistic, even the colonial perspectives to policymaking and progressive politics. You know in, my case, for example, intersectionality comes in my role as a young Latina to bring unique Global South perspective to my research projects, work, activism, but really being intersectional is also admitting that one person cannot be representative of an entire population or region or country. I think it is also being aware of our privileges, our biases, and working together in a process of cocreation aiming not to reproduce all power dynamics that marginalize even more groups. I always say that everything is political, and once we're aware of it, it makes it so much easier to take action and everyone can do it.

I personally like to do what I call the next test, we have to find the Zoom equivalent, it is looking around you, critically assessing who is there? How many non-European,

non-U.S. Americans are around? And it goes beyond how many women, how many young people, how many queer people, non-white, et cetera, and everyone can do it and point out when something seems odd. I think it is important to know what we value as young activists and stand up for it.

This is also why it is important to find meaningful connections throughout our activism and empower each other through them.

Throughout my journey as a young leader in Europe, I have noticed that sharing experience, it is extremely valuable and, you know, I come from Brazil but I have been living in Europe for many years now. Even when I was working with other young people in the French open government plan, half of the team was not French. It turned out to be a very successful intervention that really has key aspects for the political aspirations of young people. I think no matter where in the world, you know, I have always advocated for leveraging intersectionality to connect technology, Sustainable Development, Human Rights and I know there is a general rejection of politics among young people but, you know, we cannot be afraid of being political and engaging in decision making. You know, believe me, I know it feels awful when we're trying to speak and there's an old white man looking down on us, but it is really by shifting this power dynamics that will be -- that we'll be able to create innovative, just, inclusive institutions for everyone, including us.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Thank you so much for teaching us that test. I will remember that.

We have about 20 more minutes. I would like to ask the final question to Mr. Aleksandar Karotosho, that there are many obstacles facing youth when it comes to entering the policymaking sphere. We mentioned some of the obstacles today. Have you yourself faced any obstacles as a young leader in the policymaking field? Which ones? How did you overcome them?

>> ALEKSADAR KARATOSHA: Yes, of course. I have passed through all of the steps I have mentioned in the ladder of participation, in the beginning it was much harder. It is not always about the personal phase but also about the community because every country, every community has a different stage. Just to mention the statistics, for example, when it comes to the Macedonia Civil Society, there are various studies that say 80 to 90% of the young people have never taken part in a project, an initiative or been a member of an organization. Basically just a small part of the country's young population has taken part in

projects in the Civil Society organizations, in doing something good for the community. That's a very small number of people and my job was to in a way engage young people in motivating young people to engage much more in the process. There is also statistics like from one of them made from the Westminster foundation for democracy that Claims that 85% of the young people have never been consulted from their local or national bodies, governments.

So basically nobody asked them about their opinion and the speaker before me said, you know, young people are, you know, reluctant to join this political processes but if you explain to them that all of this is connected, all of the political processes are connected to every one of us, every aspect of our lives, even if -- if you're an artist, director, whatever you are, all of the political happenings, all of the policy, they're influencing our daily lives and when you explain that to young people I think they will be much more eager to join the process. I mean, I'm active not in politics but the policy, the political situation happening in the country since I was 13, 14 years, I was really engaged back then which is not usual for a child or a young person. There are definitely difficulties for our voices to be heard and our ideas to be implemented and in a way I think that it is a normal process, it is a natural transition, our country, our region, the Western Balkans region, it is -- it was socialistic, was more authoritarian and we're transitioning to democratic values and all of our countries are democratic and we're in a way adjusting to the process because it is very hard even today for the politicians to listen, to really acknowledge that young people are having good ideas and are valuable.

It is a process. I think with the time that comes, I think it will be better and better.

I see the situation before five, six, years ago, it was worst, we were in a way a decoration, a token. Now let's say we're consulted. We have the adults that initiate, but we're part of the process and we climb fewer ladders, a few steps on the ladder in the last few years. I think that the situation is getting better. Personally I have taken part in some of the important processes like the national strategy for young people, basically I was part in the beginning when it was drafted and then I was part of the Action Plan that was for the last year or two, but basically we're contributing as an individual, as an organization in the whole process and most of the ideas, they're already accepted.

So the situation, it is much better from my perspective.

I believe that we have a lot to offer youth now, it engages young people in the local, national bodies, for example, the government must consult with the local bodies, the local youth Councils and in a way young people will be heard more and more and we have youth cooperation offices working with the youngsters and the governments and I'm optimistic in this way. As that integration path continues, the -- the countries in the Western Balkans, they're not part of the E.U., still I think that it will be getting much better because the E.U. is supportive and has a lot of support to the young people through different programmes and also pressure to politics to include us in all of the processes.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Great. Thank you so much.

Thank you to the speakers from session one, to Mr. Ivan Martinovic, Veronica Piccolo, Luisa Franco Machado and Aleksandar Karotosho for reminding us to be resilient, to speak up, to find a way and to climb the participation ladder so that we reach the top and that we are present in the communities we're coming from. Thank you for being inspirational to us, motivating us to get more involved starting with the local, working our way up.

Thank you for your participation as always. It has been very nice to have you.

Celia, back to you.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you very much.

Thank you for your great moderation. I thank you also, all of the speakers for the great contributions.

I think you have given us a very meaningful insight and also very nice tools to work towards the meaningful youth engagement. Everyone here in this session, I'm sure, we're all aiming to contribute to meaningful youth engagement by preparing ourselves in a nice way like Veronica said. We have to be ready in order to be in the appropriate scenario, the appropriate time with the appropriate knowledge as well. They take us into account a meaningful way, our voices matter, but we have to prove that they matter.

Also Luisa Franco Machado addressed, sometimes we may find ourselves out of place which is totally normal as we're young, we may be scared, we come from the academia world, we're not used to really getting involved in real policymaking. It may be scary. We have nothing to lose. We just can win. We can just raise our voices and make others brave as well to join us. I think we have nothing

to lose and a lot to win towards this and it has been very meaningful the different stepladder that Mr. Aleksandar Karotosho addressed in how we should first be aware of what we're doing so that nobody can manipulate us. I think as you have said, nowadays, if you have fake news, social media, we can be easily manipulated and it is very easy to fall into this wrong actions and being aware, having critical thinking, it is very, very important. It is something that we do not always learn in schools, so we may learn by ourselves and asking ourselves questions, if what we're doing is right, if we know what we're doing, and so to be able to contribute in these different layers. Once we're aware, we can gain the knowledge, then share the knowledge, and then the knowledge can be heard and taken into account by the important stakeholders that really have final decision power. It is really nice insight into these let's say contribution processes that I think everyone has to take into account, just to be aware in this world.

Finally, Ivan Martinovic addressed interesting issues regarding the power, the artificial intelligence, how youth are able to contribute to this even though sometimes we may not seem as specialized or expert as old people we have been born in this kind of digital world so our voices really matter in these and we're very interested in contributing to this.

I want to thank all of the speakers for your really meaningful contributions.

Now I will let the floor to the audience just in case someone wants to address any kind of questions. Please go ahead. If you don't want to take the floor, feel free to write any question in the chat..

It seems that we have --

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Athena has a hand up.

>> Athena Vassilopoulos: A question for Luisa Franco Machado that sometimes the youth is suicide lined in terms of making stuff for youth, how do we move away from the theme where we integrate youth in a way that's not limited for youth?

>> LUISA FRANCO MACHADO: I think we can't forget what we have to bring to the table. I said this, and I would like to emphasize it, you know, we're young, that doesn't mean that we're not qualified. A lot of us, we have, you know, very good education, we have, you know, participated in different political spheres, different initiatives, this is something we can't forget.

Of course, you know, in the end, we have to prove ourselves and what Celia was saying, you know, sometimes

knowing that we can do it is not enough. We have to show how we have done it and that's why I think it is important to really, you know, speak up and I'm always talking about, you know, when I talk to my friends, et cetera, about, you know, posting things on social media, especially for LinkedIn, Twitter for example, you know, post what you have done, post what you believe in, post your ideas, you know, share this with the world because that gives you some sort of -- almost agency in your own path, and don't be afraid to, you know, go up to people, hey, I think I can contribute. Do you want to talk to now? You know, really be out there. I think it is -- I don't know, it is one of the first steps to cross this line of building things just for us to building things for everyone as well.

>> ANDREEA BARBU: Thank you for the answer. We have one more question from Max Zuber.

>> MAX ZUBER: Thank you.

Thank you for the insight. I'm sorry I was late to the meeting. I hope that the question I will pose now hasn't been asked already. I'll try to ask them either way. I would have one question for Luisa Franco Machado and one for Aleksandar Karotosho.

You mentioned that we have to make sure that we have inclusive processes and forming that test that I really liked, that we can see that there is inclusivity in the room. How can we make sure that we achieve that? Have you any tips and ideas on how we can secure the participation of a more inclusive membership, especially for international process because often it feels like we still have the international promise, it is dominated by white young males often, how can we combat that.

The other one is for Aleksandar Karotosho, concerning the level of participation, any tricks or ideas of how we could proceed from one step to the other, especially when I quite often see right now especially there are more organizations, more groups interested in having some form of youth participation and it is often initiated by these organizations, how can we make sure that a process that was not initiated by youth can reach another level -- on this level of participation.

That's it, thank you very much.

>> LUISA FRANCO MACHADO: Maybe I can start.

I think this is really -- it is a really good question.

I think I can draw some parallels to when we talk about, for example, the inclusion or the role of men in feminism for example and we usually say that, you know, the

role of men in feminism is not to take our place but rather, you know, to be aware of it and then use your power, basically, to, you know, influence these spaces.

I think we can drop a parallel here. The first step, awareness. You know, being aware that this is a thing, a problem. The next step, it is using our own power, not just as men, but you know as people who are already included in these processes to also be aware, say, well, I don't think this is not an inclusive process and this should change. That would be my take away.

>> ALEKSADAR KARATOSHA: Thank you for the question.

My suggestion would be to in a way organize yourself in a group, Civil Society organizations are a really good example of it. They represent the cause that you can in a way support, and there are a lot of youth organizations, a lot of Civil Society organizations that represent different things, you can find the one that you're interested in, you can find the thing that you want to pursue, and you join their cause and because together you will be much stronger. An individual cannot change the community but a group united, a united group of young people will be definitely somebody, something that can influence the community. The first suggestion would be in a way to find like-minded people, join the organization, join the movement, do something that's consistent of young people that want to do the same thing as you. In a way, partake an elected role in the whole process.

Also I would like to mention to get informed. Again, an organization can also manipulate the young people in order to pursue their own background interests. Get informed about the organization, get involved about the political organization, the history that's happened in your country, on a regional level, in the world context, now we have Climate Change, a potential war escalation. So basically we have to be aware of the global context of the issues and you should be informed of the things happening -- not an expert on everything, of course, as a lot of the Balkans people are in the region, but you should get informed about the topics that matter to you. Also here is the development of soft skills, personally I think that there are amazing opportunities and I recommend everybody to join, you can learn a lot of soft skills needed for let's say to pursue your interests because I know young people have the tendency to be -- to revolt against authorities, to let's say against the government, against the one in charge, but when you start to get into this kind of consultation, you start meeting people, you

see that it is much better if you have a more -- if you use more diplomacy, let's say discussions, a soft tone if the circumstances allow, of course, because when you revolt, there is a revolt on the other side and it becomes an issue and in the end, no one will get anything.

When you develop this, let's say critical thinking theme work, these skills that are very important to manage the group, I think it is much easier to pursue what you want on the other groups, whatever you want to change.

These are my two, three tips to help you in your youth engagement.

>> Max Zuber: Thank you.

>> Andrea: Thank you for reminding us how to be careful on what organizations we sign up for and that they represent what they're saying and they're looking for the youth benefit rather than other devious motives. Thank you for warning us.

Thank you to Luisa Franco Machado again for her thorough answers and explaining how important it is to be aware and not be misinformed and develop your skills and look out for what's happening in the world in order to become that global youth community that we're looking to do.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you for the questions from the audience and the speakers to kindly respond to them.

I think now, if there are not any more questions, in the chat, I do not see any more question, no more hands raised so we can finish this session.

I thank once again all of the speakers for joining us for meaningful discussion and meaningful youth engagement, giving insights on how can we do it in an appropriate way, in a way that it really matters and that really gets into place.

Thank you very much.

Now we will go into a 15-minute break so you can go, refill your coffee and get ready for the second session which will be about youth voices in quality education towards a digital future within additional contribution which will be giving us some outputs from the crosscutting session that took place last Friday which was a side event for the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and there were two points that were discussed where the quality of education and also gender equality in the STEM field, technology field and we'll get meaningful insights from her.

So we'll see you now in 15 minutes.

>> LUISA FRANCO MACHADO: Thank you, everyone. It was

a great session.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you. (Break).

>> CELIA FALCON: Hello, everyone. Welcome to the second session. I hope you had time to refill your coffee and take a breath.

As we said before, we'll start this discussion from the Youth Envoy from the innovation connect Youth Group which was held last week. Thank you for presenting on this event, for coming today to present your main conclusions.

Please, the floor is yours.

>> Athena Vassilopoulos: I will be speaking about the SG4 and 5. Regarding SG4, which is quality education, members and stakeholder it's and different countries, they're committed to work to the development of digital skills, capacity building, digital skills development, and there are challenges when it comes to offering quality education that was brought up. Firstly, there is a challenge of digital development in rural areas, representatives of Kyrgyzstan reminded us of challenges and tools being developed and there are challenges with cost and limited memory of the solutions offered to work in rural areas.

Also since the pandemic we can say that the digital divide has widened requiring recovery strategy but also a strategy to improve the lack of access to Internet and related devices.

Regarding education policy, we talked about the fact it should be focused on equality rather than quality and technology should be used to enhance learning when feasible.

Finally, we also talked about capacity building for teachers which is for now limited to basic digital skills which is not sufficient to support the efforts of digitalization.

Regarding SG5, Gender Equality is recognized as a priority by members and stakeholders, and they have also made a lot of efforts to document the gender disparity, to foster data driven policies, for example, the Republic of Serbia has produced a gender equality index and there is research aiming at identifying policies on gender disparity in STEM in the Western Balkans to identify the next steps, but in addition of the development of research, which also we have to mention faces obstacles, namely the lack of data related to gender as mentioned by the representative of Serbia, we also talked about the importance of increasing women's visibility to improve representation and develop new norms as mentioned in the previous session that

stereotype remain a major obstacle for Women and Girls to participate in ICT.

Finally, we also mentioned the role of social media as an obstacle to Gender Equality as it is a tool to reinforce stereotype behavior often and this is a point also to take into account and as we also mentioned in the previous session, Gender Equality does not only concern women but men also have to take an active step in building awareness and calling others on their behavior.

Those are main points from the Regional Forum, do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you very much for your intervention. I think I assisted in the event as well, there were some very interesting contributions as you have just mentioned. Thank you very much for assisting, for coming here today to present us the outcomes.

Now I will leave the floor to the next session moderator who will be Andrei Dodea moderating the session and asking the questions to the speakers. Please, the floor is yours.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you so very much, Celia.

This is our second panel for today, and in this panel we'll be discussing the main challenges in achieving quality education in Europe aligned with the expectations of the digital future.

The speakers will also address the main actions undertaken by their organizations to achieve this very important goal.

On today's panel we have Ms. Sabrina Vorbau, I apologize for the mispronunciation.

Sabrina Vorbau a project manager at the European Schoolnet and a member of its Digital Citizenship Team since 2014 and coordinating the youth activities and the annual youth panel as part of The Better internet For Kids Project welcome.

>> SABRINA VORBAU: Hello, everyone. Very nice being with you.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Nice to be with you as well.

I have to ask, on the website of the European Schoolnet where you work as a project manager, it states that it aims to help schools become effective in the pedagogical use of technology. Could you please tell us more about what type of technology this refers to? Why is it important to develop the adequate skills to develop these technologies? You have the floor.

>> SABRINA VORBAU: Yes. Absolutely. Thank you so much. Thank you for inviting me to join you this morning.

So as has been said, I'm part of the Digital Citizenship Team here at European Schoolnet, and we're basically dealing with any kind of topic in regards to online safety, promoting media literacy education, also challenges children and young people, but also other users are facing when they're being online.

So just to come back to the question, we're basically talking any kind of technologies that foster digital skills and media literacy education and I think it is very safe to say that we're mostly nowadays referring to smart devices because this is the way that people are accessing the Internet of today.

We feel it is very important to include technology within teaching and learning activities and as all of you surely now, children and young people growing up with technology nowadays from a very young age on, we are seeing images of toddlers who are in front of an iPad, who seem very, very comfortable using this iPad, they can't even speak, write, do anything but they know the swipe finger, they seem very comfortable with this.

It is very important that we from a very young age embrace these technologies when children and young people are using this. By nowadays, we're also not any more talking about the technical skills. I think ten years ago, many more years ago, we were talking just about hard, technical skills that we wanted to teach children and young people but nowadays, all of the challenges that we're facing when being online, we are also talking soft skills and formal social skills as well.

We need to make sure that young people and children that we support them when -- to make sure they're navigating the Internet in a safe, responsible way, and I think, yeah, the latest events speaking about the current situation in Ukraine, but also the pandemic are very good examples that show how easily children and young people are exposed to sensitive, harmful content online and not necessarily this content, it is not just coming from the traditional media any more, from news channels, but also from other people, content creator, influencer, we need to be aware that all of us, is a content creator when being online and it is very important to make sure that we are consuming resources that are very trustful. I think this is very important to teach children and young people about because unfortunately social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, they have become places where an awful amount of these kinds of misinformation, so-called fake news are circulating, so these are just -- let's say the

main, the most important reasons of why when we're working together with adults, educators, parents, we always tell them that they need to embrace the technology that children and young people are using. We're not asking them that they need to understand all of the technical requirements of the TikTok platform, I also don't understand that, but you have to have a conversation with your child, you have a conversation with the young people, you need to ask them what are they doing when online and also what are they seeing.

I think this is where it starts, when you talk about technology, you don't need to have devices in your hand, I think it is most important to start a conversation and to also understand the child and the young person's perspective. Why are they using this platform, why are they so interested, so just basically showing interest and, yeah, as I said, embracing the technologies and the platforms children and young people are using.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you so very much for your answer.

I fully agree, we do need to first have a dialogue about technology rather than understand the technical terms. Thank you very much.

On this panel, we also have Ms. Lela Violet Halloum, she's the youngest ever IBM X champion in history for the efforts to demystify the tech industry by uniting thousands of young technologists globally to use technology as a catalyst to achieve social movement.

Welcome.

>> LELLA VIOLET HALLOUM: Thank you for having me. Good morning to everyone.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Good morning to you too.

You are the youngest ever IBM Z champion in the programme history. Congratulations. What made you interested in tech in the first place?

>> LELLA VIOLET HALLOUM: I would just like to say I think always I have been such a naturally curious individual. Whether it is technology or not, I have always been the one to ask what some people may consider the annoying question, why? I think that's such a powerful one rather and I think in adopting that mentality from a young age I have been exposed to many opportunities. I have kind of got this now kind of motivation that is being proactive, not reactive, and thinking that opportunities won't just come to me, but I need to proactively go and seek them. I think a lot of the time it stems out of frustration for you will see something in the world that you want to see

changed, you will see that you're not represented in the tech industry, I attended my first hackathon at 10, the event was intended for post graduates and I sat there and people thought I was as someone previously said, the daughter of a participant at the event.

Yeah. It is always just being proactive, what it is that I'm wanting to do. Just wanting to understand what I would consider really the language of the future. I think at school there is such an emphasis on picking up languages, French, Spanish, learning how to code for me at the age of 8 was a really eye opening opportunity and it really did expose me to so much more as to what went behind all of my favorite things that I engaged in, learning to use some of our most edgy tech kind of solutions in terms of learning to read and write using technology. I was just always exposed to it, I was keen to understand how it works.

I'm not kind of surrounded by technology and allowing it to consume me. Rather, I have some control over it.

I'm allowed to use it as my catalyst to achieve whatever it is that I'm most interested about. In this case, the Sustainable Development Goals.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, that's something that we all can take away, proactivity is mandatory for achieving anything, I fully agree with that.

On our panel, we also have Xhoana Shehu, the policy officer at ETNO Association. Welcome.

>> XHOANA SHEHU: Hello.

Can you see me?

>> ANDREI DODEA: Yes, we can. Hello!.

You are the policy officer at the ETNO Association. What is your role in making sure youth has a voice and place in the digital future?

>> XHOANA SHEHU: Yes. Thank you Andrei, thank you, Celia, thank you for colleagues from the ITU for inviting me today. Delighted to be here and a part of this panel engaging digital education. A few words about ETNO, we represent the European Telecom sector, our members represent 70% of the investments in Telecom infrastructure in Europe so they're leading the way in new networks and services as well bringing 5G for Europe, developing databased services and enabling networks with AI.

Before answering to your question, if you will allow me also some general remarks: Achieving quality education to be prepared for the digital future, when we discuss this topic, it is fundamental to have all stakeholders around the table, youth, NGOs, like this panel today, governments,

schools, the workforce, it is also important to continue the discussion with the businesses in that kind of debate. They are part of the solution. They're well-placed also to prepare learners for the needs of the job market and when we talk about quality education, we talk about skills in ICT, in digital, and we saw it was a priority for the European Commission with the digital compass for 2030 that evolves around four cardinal points and one is skills. The targets, they're aiming at having minimum, 80% of the population with digital skills in 2030 and to million employed ICT specialists in the E.U.

Coming back to your questions, about my role in making sure that youth has a voice and a place in the digital future, first it starts with the fact that I'm advocating for enabling this digital future because fostering development of high-performing digital education eco system is a priority for ETNO and for this ecosystem to prosper, it needs connectivity that's the backbone of our digital society. In my work, it translates by advocating for the deployment of infrastructure, connectivity, digital equipment, and why is it important? It may sound granted but the global study found insufficient digital infrastructure is a number one barrier preventing the development of a digital culture at school. That's why we're advocating for more digital infrastructure.

Second, as an association with a European footprint, we're also engaged with projects at the European level. This is a case, for example, for a project with the Federation of Education in Europe covering more than 500 educational institutions in 41 countries in Europe and as you know, the pandemic, the crisis gave a difficult environment for students and young graduates to find a professional opportunities in the market and this collaboration between members and ETNO members will help the students to have professional opportunities in the Telecom sector and meet the skills requirements for our members and help them to face the challenges that we have today of finding qualified workforce with the right digital skills.

For example, this translates into having a questionnaire identifying the existing and future skills that will be needed in the telecommunication sector and also to build bridges between young people and the professional work to prepare them for this.

The digital sector, it has been creating jobs without interruption for over ten years and there is a constant search for talent.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you so very much for your insights. Very good to have you here.

The next member of our panel is Mr. Danel Kalemi, he's a machine learning researcher at Squishy Robotics and the Youth Envoy for the Generation Connect Europe group.

>> DANIEL KALEMI: Thank you for having me. It's actually close to 3:00 a.m. here in San Francisco, but I thought it would be worth it to give up sleep to be part of this panel. Yes. Thank you for having me.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you so very much for joining us at such a late hour.

You are coleading a health tech initiative to improve access to the diagnosis of diabetic retinopathy through machine learning, what's it mean to you to be a young person holding the leading role in the digital development field?

>> DANIEL KALEMI: Well, yeah. Although I wouldn't call myself as a leader in this space. I would say it is more of a fulfilling process. I think that the key here, it is education. Education is definitely key.

Before I had experiences like I did my undergrad in Greece, I started my undergrad in Albania, I dropped out because I didn't like the programme.

I think it is really kind of -- the education, the everything that you go through, it really projects you to the path that you're going towards to and since Silicon Valley, San Francisco, they're very well-known for the start-up ecosystem, all of the tech hubs and the clusters, I just wanted to take advantage of all of this ecosystem and it is really essential, embedded in their school system, especially the big schools here, the Berkely where I study, Stanford, it is not a surprise that the big tech is here. It is not actually the schools, they're here because of the tech, it is the other way around. The schools were here, they enabled all of these let's say healthy ecosystem for them to thrive.

It is coleading a health start-up, it is challenging, but I think when you have the guidelines, you start, it is an exciting process in previous schools, my undergrad, it was a small community college in Greece, we didn't really have let's say innovative ecosystems. Here, when I started, the orientation, we had 35 different competitions to take part in and all of them were backed by venture capital funds or even from social entrepreneurship fund and just you miss out if you don't start. I was like why not. Even though I was thinking maybe start in a big tech, maybe do some research, I just thought this was a good surprise

to just try and I think everyone around my age would try to do different things. It is part of the process. You're just exploring to find where you want to be, the next five, ten years, and I think the most important part, you don't -- you definitely don't have to, for example, take money and then have to stay or question or give answers for what different venture capitalists have to do with the money and then you have your space to do everything because most of the money is grants and you can explore everything. You can start from social entrepreneurship where you don't necessarily have to win anything in terms of revenue but you can start as a big corporation or a benefit corporation where the main goal is not only to break even and to be sustainable, but also to have an impact in this space where you're trying to -- for example, the diabetic space, it is over 444 million people who have diabetes and it will be close to a half billion by the end of this decade. Especially remote areas where this is inaccessible, just trying to create technology that makes this technology accessible, it is really crucial to just create this preventive medicine that is lacking in many fields, especially with the U.S., the health system here, it is horrible. Just wishing everything would be on my health insurance because, yeah, if something happens then you definitely, the bill, it is fat.

I would say, yeah, it is definitely education here, it is crucial, they really walk you through the processes, that's something that I lacked back home and I wished that this would be a more streamlined process among all of the schools around Europe and I know that although this is a shameful, this is a self-promotion with the youth declaration, we also did and actually our main vision and thematic priority, it was capacity development. We had 8 points, if you check on the website, that's we think that many universities can benefit and improve all around Europe, going through creating more R & D centres to creating more start-up ecosystems, especially metropolitan areas where you have more universities and you can create clusters of innovation hubs, or just to create technology that engages all of the youth all around Europe.

I think that this is just to create all of the infrastructure to make it easier for everyone to connect. Yeah. It is definitely beneficial. You don't necessarily have to call it the second Silicon Valley but a separate one that can bring way more benefits all around.

Yeah.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you so much for your answers.

Especially for your participation on this panel.
We deeply appreciate it.

The last but not least member of our panel today,
Miquel Castillo.

As part of this organization, what is the positive impact that an international background and mindset achieved in youth education for the digital and interconnected future?

>> MIQUEL CASTILLO: The international background that traveling gives us, it helps us to understand different points of view. Yes. You meet different people, different cultures, you talk different languages and then you feel empathy with all of the different people.

Educating young generations to be open-minded and traveling helps to be open-minded. The young generations, they're more respectful probably because if they meet a lot of people, if they are able to be on the other points of view, to go in the other perspective there will be more respect on the Internet. This digital interpretive tool, it will create a new way to meet people before traveling and to have the experience that travel can give you before. So have a practice, to meet other people from other cultures that could be interesting for you without having the necessity to be with them physically.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you.

Looking at the clock, we still have time for another round of questions or at least we will try to. We'll also attempt to fit in some questions from the audience within the allotted time.

We'll go back to Ms. Sabrina Vorbau.

Your role is directly related with media literacy education and in fact youth participation. What are the main challenges in that regard, which strategies are you implementing?

>> SABRINA VORBAU: Thank you so much for that question.

I think the main challenge is first and foremost the level of youth participation and the seriousness we give to it. I think in the work I'm doing, in the work my organization is doing, we take youth participation very seriously. We believe that young people should have a seat around the table by nature and not just be a nice to have in addition. Especially as you said, when talking media literacy education and other policy that directly has an impact on their education and their online experiences, so for us, youth participation should not only be a ticking the box exercise. Of course, we as adults we have to

protect children and young people and we need to support their decision making, but we also have to listen to them, to their views and to their experiences, as I said before, to better understand what are they doing online and maybe why certain platforms, certain topics, are so important, of interest for them.

In this regard, maybe just two good practices I would like to share with you, so as part of the work I'm doing, we are facilitating the better Internet for kids project on behalf of the European Commission and through this project we were able over the past decade to establish a network of better Internet for kids Youth Ambassadors. These are young people from across Europe between the age of 12 to 33, 34 and we tried to engage this group as much as possible into our project activities and along every step along the way. Two examples here, where we managed also to involve them into policy and decision making discussions, which we feel is very important, the European Commission is currently revising the better Internet for kids strategy for the first time after ten years and before doing so together with our network of European Safer Internet Centres, we organized last summer consultations, online or face-to-face consultation with children or young people across Europe and we also were very happy that through our partners we were also able to reach children in more countryside or rural areas, so this is also something very important when doing youth participation to really make sure to be as inclusive as possible in this regard. Also trying to reach the more vulnerable groups as well.

Based on this consultations, the outcomes of the consultations, they were put forward to the colleagues at the European Commission and they are taken into account when revising the strategy which is, of course, strategically and politically very important at European Commission level. This is one best practice.

The other one, it is that we're also working on the better Internet for kids policy mapping. Here we're working together with representatives from different ministries across Europe and we want to better understand what is the current situation of online child safety policies across the Member States and here again we have an advisory group and we always invite one of our big youth Ambassadors to sit around the table when this advisory group meets. Here again, I think these are two also very good examples where youth participation was implemented at the beginning of the process -- was implemented at the beginning of the process. We often see youth participation

happening but young people are usually only coming in at the end, when the end product is already done and they're presented this end product but they don't really have any impact or changing or questioning the product.

We also want to try to really involve them from the early stage on from the beginning of the process, which we feel is very important, it is very refreshing and important to have the voice of a young person or multiple young people as part of the discussion. Especially when we're making decisions or policy decisions that are made that have an impact for them personally.

These are just two examples and I think there are other very great examples out there. As I said, I think the approach, the common sense, it should be to have by nature young people around the table when -- yeah, policy discussions are happening, as well as and as I said before in my -- at the beginning of the intervention, it should not be a ticking the box exercise to have young people at an event or at the table.

Thank you.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you so very much.

Ms. Lella Violet Halloum, we know you study computer science, but when did you decide to change your focus and do you think many of your peers would feel in a similar way to change their focus away from computer science?

>> LELLA VIOLET HALLOUM: Just to clarify, I studied at the exam that you take about the age of 16 typically, at the age of 12 because I was so interested in ICT and understanding how it works. I was just so de-motivated by all other 12 year olds were taught computer science I needed to be pushed in this way. However, as I progressed through my academic career I realized just how interested I was in humanities, making change for the world, wanting to see social good. I just felt that that aspect of technology wasn't reflected in the computer science curriculum which here in the U.K. at least is typically math heavy, data driven, it was only when the pandemic occurred and I had to choose what I wanted to study post 16 that I decided I wanted to pursue English literature, history, politics instead. While I did have moments of doubts thinking, you know, maybe I am cutting off reconnecting with technology it was actually discovering the world of tech for good and social impact using technology that reignited my passion in tech and everything that I now do.

However, I think it is only when I tell my peers about opportunities whether it is IBM, things like this that

we're attending today, that they realize how much more there is to technology. I think that instead of relying on teachers, parents, to teach young people how to use social media, the world that tends to revolve around the mobile phone, we instead need to call on industry leaders to do just that. They truly are the ones who are producing this technology and who better to teach us, after all, they're our future bosses.

Especially during the pandemic, a lot of people were socially isolated, TikTok was a big thing, banana bread baking were a big thing and most people say they won't realize the power of technology and uniting people and the development in medical technology, supercomputing, all of these things, because people are just so demotivated by the stigma, by the curriculum, by what they see typical in tech and it is only proactive individuals like myself who is benefit from these opportunities.

I think going forward, you really need to breakdown these echo chambers of opportunity and ensure that we bring the industry, thought leadership, the U.N., Generation Connect into the classroom where we're not only having a select few individuals representing the so-called voice of youth, like we are here today, but rather we're widening that to ensure that our voices are heard and broadcast across every classroom.

So that everyone feels that they have their say at the table.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you so much for the insightful answer.

Also, I have to ask, you are clearly incredibly active in engaging young people in technology, why in your opinion is youth inclusion so integral in the decision making process and the wider development of digital education?

>> LELLA VIOLET HALLOUM: Thank you for asking that.

To put it plainly for the sake of time, I think that it is important, just as you seek, say, healthcare advice from a medical professional, I think that we need to start seeking young people about how we want to lead our digital futures and our digital tomorrow as we're the experts say of growing newspaper this digital first world. To put it plainly, all of the current industry leaders, the future bosses, and I think that students are constantly evolving, whether that's the last two years in the pandemic or contrasting to the start of our academic career, right back in primary school to present day, if we don't create space for these meaningful narratives, the industry leaders will be making decisions about impacted societal groups without

us and therefore it would be likely that the outcome would be based on perhaps what industry leaders think of youth inclusive, but rather a really detached from the concerns and experience of young people in the present day.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Interesting. Thank you.

Back to Mr. Danel Kalemi, what skills do you think young people need to learn in order to be ready to pursue a successful career in technology nowadays?

>> DANIEL KALEMI: Yeah. It's -- it's definitely a complex thing. Like when you talk about the tech field, it is very diverse. I mean, nowadays, technology can be applied in every single field, but I would say generally you should be more interdisciplinary, I think we should go away from the concept of oh, you need to be -- you definitely need strong technical skills, but that's not enough..

Some skills are definitely crucial, this is a cliché to say it is important. After you build a tool, you need to inform why this tool is important. You need to say to your team that -- why there needs to be a decision making after you have the tool.

They are interconnected.

I think probably a liberal arts college education in combination with maybe polytechnic institutes that we have all around Europe would be nice. Generally like my experience in the Western Balkans, when you start with the field, you no longer are able to change your field because you took that entrance exam on the last year of high school. It is very, very monolithic and I think that we should just make the educational system more flexible to allow although you're taking someone skill, computer science, electrical engineer, whatever within the tech field, combine this with maybe a second major or maybe a minor, where you interact with the technical skills with maybe business, maybe law, maybe public policy, whatever. I think this is crucial, this cross-pollination or this interdisciplinary, it is definitely crucial I would say to make young people succeed in the field.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Okay. So interdisciplinarity. Interesting.

Also, you have served as a coorganizer of the Albania Youth Internet Governance Forum and a tech Director for of the Dialogue on Internet governance. Did you feel that youth had the skills, knowledge, motivation to get involved in public policymaking discussions?

>> DANIEL KALEMI: The short answer is yes, but there is always this but!

The thing all around the Internet governance, I have been in the field for almost four years, and what I see -- this is a very tight knit ecosystem, wherever I go, I would find the same young people which is good. People stay involved, this is nice. You are not coming in for once and then you disappear.

I just see everywhere that this is not diversified, not more people as I would anticipate are coming in the decision making tables. I think it is crucial that we know that for example joining a big tech as a young student out of college would be maybe the sexy thing to do nowadays.

It makes sense, because all businesses around the world, they account for 80% of GDP worldwide, but again, they account for the same around 80% of the global warming, that they contribute to the world and all of the other issue, lobbying, government, everything. So there needs to be an accountability part and policymaking is really important to this process, you can't just leave self-regulation. Although I love where the problem leads to find the solution was the business, this is impossible. You have to definitely need -- to have a governing body that oversees all of the processes n is what I try to echo to everyone, policymaking, it is really important. I have to confess, before joining as a computer science, I really loved going into public policy for my undergrad and I didn't join because I just know that all around the Balkans, you know, the governance, it is very corrupt, everything, I just didn't want to be part of that. But that's not a solution because by joining you may just make a change I continue with my computer science and most of my peers just go into the tech fields because they pay more. I come back every time to the public policy in another lessen, let's say from the tech lens. It is really important to just diversify the field, to have more youth being heard, to be part of the stakeholder decision making tables and that just happens by just being part of it.

I think for us, who are here, we are definitely into the process, we're just trying to involve more people into the field and I think this will just make things better and will hold other stakeholders accountable. It will just show that we care and for as long as we echo that, people will have this sense of accountability.

So definitely youth should be part and they definitely have interests and it should be more. Definitely.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Agreed. Agreed.

I fully love this quote by joining you just might make a change. Thank you.

And also in order to facilitate some questions from the audience, I will now ask the last question of today's panel for Xhoana Shehu. In your opinion, what are the next steps for achieving quality education in Europe that's informed by understanding of the digital future?

>> XHOANA SHEHU: Thanks.

It is a very broad question. I will maybe focus on a few points because there are many, many steps that we can take.

Talking the future, I have already mentioned the need to build bridges between students and professionals and the fact that there is no quality education on digital without connectivity and in Europe there is still a discrepancy between depending on where you're from and your social background and I saw in the chat that this observation is also shared in other parts of the world.

On another point, from my personal experience, I remember that my generation, maybe some participants here can relate to this, I got the chance to have a first IT lessons already in primary school in France, even if we didn't have any computer at home back at the time, and for example we're using these kind of disk storage in a square with a low storage and today we're using the 1, 2 terabytes, so we're using the Cloud, so the storage, it is not something that you can touch anymore. My point, things are changing fast and the education has to be as fast as innovation.

Thanks to the basic skills in primary school, we learned, but also we got continuous digital education and this helped us to have this capacity to adapt because without the basic skills you cannot. That's why it is important to have these IT skills at an early age and it has to be also -- it is a prerequisite to be ready for the digital future and this allows the young people to adapt, to be more agile online and in short, this enables digital literacy. We have to bear in mind, 60% of the 9 year olds are in schools that are not digitally equipped and this is a big obstacle for basic digital skills and there is a big room for improvement here.

My final point that we absolutely need to consider, but I think it is also discussed in the next panel, it is ensuring that girls and young women are equally represented in digital studies and careers because gender gap is an area of improvement and today only 20% of employees in high-tech industries are women in Europe. The tech sector, it is outperforming in that field because we managed to double this number, and I think it was mentioned the need

to attack the stereotype and we think it is very important, that's why we're also engaging in projects to encourage more representation of women in ICT sector such as for example women for cyber with the objectivity to promote and create and support the participation of women in the field of cybersecurity. It is with projects like that that we can erase this gender gap and also to be more inclusive.

I'm looking forward to hear the next panel on that.

>> ANDREI DODEA: We are also looking forward to hearing the next panel.

I think then I have to thank you very much for all of the speakers joining us today. Thank you, Sabrina Vorbau, Lella Violet Halloum, Xhoana Shehu, Danel Kalemi, thank you Miguel.

We appreciate the meaningful insights and the challenge of the quality education for shaping a sustainable digital future where no one is left behind and especially youth. With that being said, I would like to open the floor for any questions the audience may have and also Celia, you have the floor.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you for the amazing moderation of the panel, and thank you for the meaningful insights, quality education is a fourth SDG, something that all governments and all stakeholders care about. But the thing is, it cannot be something done just by grown-ups and stakeholders for youth, but youth has definitely to be involved in this discussion, they're the ones that will receive the education and the digital skills and they're the ones that are going to live in this digital future.

I think it is very meaningful, and the efforts that your agencies and organizations, that they're doing from the school association that Sabrina had talked about, also to the insights given to us by Lella Violet Halloum on how young people are thinking, involving, and how does for example this group Generation Connect has to be included in the schools, not just like something very nice that young people are doing but something that everyone can get involved in order for everyone to feel really -- with a meaningful impact.

Also, I want to thank you, as we all know that this year, it is the world tourist summit in this summer, right, together it will also happen in this sum, the Generation Connect Youth Summit, indeed, for Europe, this is a very meaningful and important year for youth and as he said, for people to be open-minded and to get aware of the different backgrounds that other people, other youth around the world may have, not just by being connected in the Internet, in

the social area but the human experience and this makes everybody more open-minded and more involved and this will then be provided in the social media. It is something that is indeed very much needed.

And Xhoana Shehu, I think you made a very important point regarding that indeed the main step is to ensure connectivity and to ensure useful infrastructures in order to allow kids to have the skills development and they need to have the capacity -- the connectivity, they need to have the equipment.

So I hope that through the efforts of the organizations like yours, and also public organization, this connectivity, it is finally achieved.

Now I want to leave the floor for the audience. Please, if you want to ask anything to our speaker, just feel free to raise the hand, take the floor or put it in the chat as you prefer.

Please. Go ahead.

I can start had from one question that was posted privately to me for Sabrina Vorbau. The question is if a better Internet for kids is an example of the European youth engagement strategy with a place for local focus through the different cyber Internet centres, and he also wants to know if this is key for positive outcome, the platform has achieved in the last years? Please, Sabrina, the floor is yours.

>> SABRINA VORBAU: Yes. Thank you.

Thank you for the question.

Hello to one of our Better internet for Kids Use Youth Ambassadors. Just picking, this is another best practice example on what can happen if someone is eager and interested to learn and to engage with others, be it other young people but also adults. As I said, we are really happy that every year we are able to invite new young people and start working with new young people in this programme and that they're able to join this Ambassador programme. I think that these young people, especially colleagues like Joel, others like-minded ones are really good examples on, yeah, how the knowledge can be transferred to other young people at national level. As I said before, I think for us, it is also very important and Daniel had made a similar comment, it is that sometimes you go to meetings and events and you see the same young people sitting around the table, it is very, very good that we have those young people who stay connected who have the chance and the possibility to join these events. I also feel, of course, it is important that these young people

also act as amplifiers, Ambassador, lighthouses within their countries and I think that Joao is a good example, I know everything that he's been able to pick up with us and the work he's been doing. He puts that work forward to his colleagues at national level and to other children and young people. I think it is really important to, yeah, empower those who are fortunate enough to have the possibility to join the events and meetings, who have the possibility from a young age also to engage in the international -- in this international environment, it is absolutely not a given and, of course, maybe the opportunity also of the pandemic was that events like today's events are happening online so this again gives more opportunities for people who maybe are not able to travel across the globe to join and listen to these conversations. I think someone else said it earlier before, I think awareness raising is also key and, of course, we need to do this awareness raising through the platforms that young people are using. This is why also I said we should not shy away from social media platforms, Instagram, TikTok, et cetera, this is really where we can reach the young people and we can -- yeah, grab their attention.

Of course, the success of our programme heavily depends on the young people themselves. I'm very happy that we have young people like Joao and others as part of this group that make this a constant success for the past years.

Thank you for the question.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you very much for your meaningful answer.

I think you have raised a very important topic also as Daniel had, people like us today, that we're able to I attend these events, we need to spread the word among our colleagues and among everyone. Some people, they just don't get involved because they don't really get to know these events are going on. So by sharing this in social network, getting the advantages of the social network, it is a great way to do so.

Like everyone here, everyone from working from the Generation Connect, other youth engagement groups, they have the chance to do this.

I'm sure that by using the social media we are making these events and this initiative, much more easy way to know and for people to get engaged.

Another question for Lella Violet Halloum, you have been in tech for good. I wanted to know what's been the

tech for good project that's the most profound impact or that you are most proud of and after that, I would like to know what you would like to leave to our audience today. Please. You have these two questions. The floor is yours.

>> LELLA VIOLET HALLOUM: Thank you. I lost my mute button there.

The last two years have been filled with so many incredible opportunities for me. I really think that as a lot of people, myself included, mentioned being proactive, not reactive in seeking opportunities, it is so great. The biggest project I probably would say -- whilst there are many, I loved realizing that the industry is not just being data driven but I can be this proactive and proud humanitarian seeking technology as an enabler for development and economic growth instead of digital tools, risking being a force of inequality to some extent. A lot of my experience within the ITU, so speaking at the girls in ITT panel, the annual I Texas U GSR, being momentous moments for me in a sense that my voice is being just as welcomed and valued as those of global heads of UNICEF, those of TikTok, Google, so that's been really great.

For those of you -- no one will know, my father is actually Lebanese, so there was a catastrophic explosion that happened not long ago there. Being interested in tech for good, growing my network, I sought to use that only for the good of society but also to kind of look at how I can connect my interests in technology with my roots and I worked on a project with the Red Cross, with IBM, and with the Universities out in Lebanon surrounding how we could use technology to kind of provide bottom-up solutions for the Lebanese people, there is a great deal of corruption, say for example donations being delivered to Lebanon were being sold on shelves by the government in packages, they were intercepted, so kind of digitalizing the efforts of grassroots organizations and NGOs that were providing donations to the Lebanese people at their time of most need was a real full circle moment for me, it felt good to be able to give back in that way.

In terms of the message I would like to leave with the audience, it would probably be echoing a lot of what I have already heard in the sense that I would love people to be the change that you want to see. I often leave sessions like these feeling really motivated and ready to leave my mark. I would just say don't wait until some big light bulb moment, instead, start to spark the meaningful conversations for change and really start small. You don't have to do something incredible immediately but rather as

already mentioned, leveling, going up that ladder of youth inclusion, having your voice heard and that you're represented, it is so important.

If I have learned anything, being a change maker, pushing for social impact is not just this one-size-fits-all task but rather it can be applying your digital skills to your local community developing in a hackathon, you know, there is just many multiphased approaches going about this.

I would really say as well, that we're so lucky as all of us are speakers are here, to be so well connected with the United Nations and Sustainable Development Goals. And I think that for people who are often lost, feeling pressured to find their social impact, find what it is that their purpose and passion is in life, it would be looking to the goals and seeing which one of those kind of wake you up in the morning, frustrated you, you want to see change within.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you for the encouraging words, your point of view is amazing.

Also regarding it is something that everyone relates to, waking up every morning, trying to fight for just one thing, something that you're really passionate about, you will for sure make a change. As you said, it doesn't need to be a great thing, but just little steps but taking every day for sure, it will lead to meaningful goals. Thank you for the insights.

I think we still have one minute and a half. Maybe we'll have time for one more question.

I know Andrei wanted to ask something. Please, the floor is yours.

>> ANDREI DODEA: Thank you so very much.

Also before I get into the question, it was asked by Veronica if the panel could share their projects, please do that in the comments.

My last question for this panel, I think it may be best addressed to Daniel, given your proximity to emerging technologies, what is the emerging technology that you're most excited about that will impact for the better education in the near future?

>> DANIEL KALEMI: I wouldn't say there is a silver bullet technology. I would say it is like a combination of technologies. Probably let's say using them responsibly and now it is a very huge problem around AI governance. I think AI has already been rooted into many solutions, in many big tech, so probably quantum technology will amplify what AI can do.

I would say, yeah, it is definitely a combination of many of the technologies. Especially digital infrastructure is an important one, bringing the other billions into the network especially low resourced regions.

Yeah. I'm really excited about it. Definitely tonight I'm going to go to sleep very optimistic. Yeah. Very inspiring. Thank you very much, everyone, for the insights.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you very much, Daniel, for your answer.

Indeed, I think a combination of all of our technologies we have will be shaping the future. Also being aware of the governance as it is needed to be taken as technologies develop so fast sometimes that law gets behind and there is no time for policymakers to really get a well insight into the possibilities of technology and also the fear and the bad things that these technologies can bring.

You bring a very meaningful insight.

Thank you.

I think now it is time for another break. First I want to thank again all of the panelists for your very interesting discussion and I know we have had difficult topics but you got to the point and I think you have given a very meaningful insight and interesting for everyone who has attended the session. I thank you all once again.

Get ready for our third and last session which will be on the topic of Gender Equality and empowering girls and young women in the field of STEM and ICTs and I think it will be a very meaningful, interesting session.

Just 15 minutes break again. Go again, refill the coffee. Get some snack, and we'll be waiting here for you. Thank you once again. See you.

(Break).

>> CELIA FALCON: Welcome. Welcome to our third session which will be on Gender Equality of Women and Girls, empowering Women and Girls in the ICTs. I hope you all refilled a cup of coffee or took a snack. This session will be very, very interesting. We have four incredible speakers and we have also our moderator, which will be Antonia Baskakov, the floor is yours.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: Thank you so much, Celia.

This session will focus on the actions undertaken by youth to empower Women and Girls in tech. We're very, very excited to speak to an incredible panel of powerful, impressive women and I'm so excited to speak to you. This session will form the basis of our continued work for the

international day of girls in ICTs to be held on April 28th.

I would love to start with Mauricia Abdol Tshilunda, who is the CEO of Data Works Communications and her work focuses on amplifying African women voices in tech, and I would love to hear why and how you became involved in that sort of work and if you could tell as you little bit more about that.

>> MAURICIA ABDOL TSHILUNDA: Sure. Absolutely.

Hello, everyone. So wonderful to see you all.

Sending warm greetings from South Africa. We still have quite a bit of sunshine here so I'm hoping to share some of my sunshine with you today from wherever you are in the world.

Once again, my name is Mauricia Abdol Tshilunda, I am based in Cape Town, South Africa. Essentially what we envision here is to make sure that irrespective of where African women are across the globe that they can engage effectively in the Internet space, in a digital ecosystem to make sure that we shape the Internet for us all, we started out -- I started out with having my first computer when I entered University.

We -- many of us come from a background where we have a very late introduction to the Internet and to digital technologies, and so for us that do make it into University, because only about 5% of African and South African women make it into the University space, we didn't have an abrupt introduction to technology, to a computer, to having to write a whole essay on a laptop, computer, when you haven't had that much exposure to begin with. I wanted to start off with that background so that you know where we're coming from and also what we're hoping to contribute in this space.

Please, if you have any question, do pop them in the chat as we're engaging in conversation today back and forth, we're open. Feel free to ask me any question that you might have.

If possible, I will share my screen just really quickly.

Great.

A key area that we have decided to focus on specifically is digital education and how it affects gender and the digital divide within our country and within our continent.

Remember, coming from a backdrop where for the large part of your childhood you are not -- you are not engaged that much with technologies, and then all of a sudden,

you're exposed to having to now function as if those you have always been exposed to technology like your counterparts and still needing to catch up it can be quite a challenge.

So on top of that, being a female, it make as things even more interesting for you because remember you are required to also wear many hats.

For example, I'm a CEO of my own company, but also a mother, I'm also expected to make sure that I'm there at the home front.

It is expected in our culture that you be both mother if you're working, you need to balance with the -- you literally need to wear all of the hats. Right.

Some of the challenges include our gee graphical location. Many of our communities, currently we're still working on our infrastructure in order to remain connected on the Internet and so considering being a mom, needing to, for example, live in a rural community, where you need to travel far distances to get to a space where there is a wi-fi connection can be challenging when you have to balance that with taking care of the kids, making sure that you are there for your husband, for your family, and also making sure that everything educationally goes well for you if you're studying at the same time.

We also have a few issues in place largely, for example, within the rural community that we recently have done, we realize that many of the men in the communities are still monopolizing the digital devices.

So you would have a family structure where there is one cellphone, the main owner of the cellphone, it is the husband of the house, and if you as the wife would want to engage with anyone electronically, you would have opportunities to have the cellphone when the husband is at home or when you have arranged for, it otherwise you don't have that free access to always have a cellphone with you, to always remain connected and to always engage. Yet we're expected to be active and to contribute to the economy of the country, that's a responsibility we carry as well.

I have some proposed solutions that we work with as part of the elevate the Africa network and I wanted us to start off with that background for now so we have an idea of where we're coming from and as the questions flow we'll work on the solutions we're working on and as young women are taking up space, becoming active in a most innovative way to make sure that we shape the Internet in a relevant way for all.

Thank you so much.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: What a comprehensive overview, I would like to hear all of that from all of the panelists. Unfortunately, I want to remind all of us, we have only one hour. We have so, so many questions.

Now I would love to speak to you, Priya Burci. So Priya Burci just amazing, impressive, and you're the COO of AIME Health and the lead of Powercoders Madrid. You have done so much in this area of work.

You have cofounded Powercoders, an organization offering courses on web development for refugees and that's just one example of many of the impressive things that you have done.

It is against that backdrop that I would love to ask what you consider to be the role of women in association technology initiatives like the ones that you have been part of, and also how can women contribute their unique life experiences to shape an inclusive, representative world of tech.

>> PRIYA BURCI: Thank you for the very flattering introduction. Yeah. Thank you for having me here.

It is a super interesting question and I would say social entrepreneurship, sort of social tech is a really interesting opportunity for women to enter the tech sector. That's definitely been my path towards entering the tech sector and especially so because I have a social sciences background. I thought it was -- I felt it was a very powerful combination of skills, focused on social impact. Regardless of background, it is really important to have women in leadership, founder positions for technological solutions for social impact because these solutions are built to change lives, they're built to solve problems, and basically to -- built to change the world. Inclusivity, representation, it is crucial to build the solutions that can change the world. There are more women featured than if you look at the top 30 start-up founders that are purely for profit. I think that's really a space that's sort of being entered by women and that's important. But that said, I think there is a lot -- a lot of work to do, and it is definitely seen in the social entrepreneurship space men fundraise more successfully than women. Sort of men led projects, social entrepreneurship, they're more featured in the media and I think, you know, when we talk about sort of women and tech, it is really important to also note that there are different experiences with women in tech and if you come from a minority background, a lower socioeconomic background, it is a lot harder and so I think it is a really promising sphere and I think make a ton of inroads

and a lot of change but it is really important to Mr. Structures that support this, that empower women and ideally also build social entrepreneurship communities for women to build on the role models to understand that there are lots of really, really amazing solutions out there and women that are kicking butts at it as well.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: Thank you so much.

I love you highlighting intersectionality and how there are different experiences for all women in tech.

That also kind of leads me to our next speaker, Mauricia Abdol Tshilunda, Chief Sustainability Officer and founder of I'm The Code. Something we touched on, it is as many other areas of our society tech as a field dominated by very, very exclusive group of mostly white men and there is a book called Invisible Women by Caroline Perez and she highlights how men shaped and conceptualized most of the systems we live in on the basis of their own lived experience from politics to medicine and also tech, and so obviously they created systems for all of us. They're only informed by one experience and consequently only works for one group of people.

So when women with are excluded, they're information on why the tech works, it is not used, why is that a problem not just generally speaking but specifically relating to the field of tech?

>> LADY MARIEME JAMME: Thank you for having me.

I'm the founder of I am The Code and I sit on the Board of Global vision for ITU.

To answer your question, it is great it hear from all of the speakers. 20 years ago, probably -- I'm an old women now -- 20 years ago, we wouldn't have this conversation for example.

You know, I remember 25 years ago, before my son was born, you know, I was telling the world that going to Thailand, ITU was organizing many competitions for young boys and girls and entrepreneurs to come in, showcase the solutions, those partners, they're now in their 30s. The point I'm trying to make, we can complain as much as we like but we have to start creating and just taking actions and our goal was to get women to code, girls and code to -- coding, it is not easy, so I didn't go to school, for example, I was born in 1970s, I don't know if some of you were born in that year, if you were born in 1970s, 1980, in Africa, you know, we were not even talking computer, all of that. We had lots of intellects especially Senegal, a lot of intellects doing things in Africa that were actually talking about math, science, technology, innovation before

anybody else talked about it. I'm sitting now in the U.K. talking to you, and I didn't go to school.. I learned coding 7 languages in my local library, now I travel across the continent to teach girls to code. The reason why it is important to talk about coding in a basic way, let's talk about infrastructure and content and connectivity. That's the job of the ITU, that's the job of the United Nations bring connectivity across rural Africa, it is the government's job to actually invest into some of the solutions. If you are right now a teenager, a young women whose 18 years old in Africa, in the next eight years you will start looking what will I do, who will I work for? If we don't have the 21st Century skills you need right now, it is going to be very unlikely for you to get a job. Education is very expensive, you know, wealthy Africans have probably, you know, a way to educate children abroad, outside of Africa, or inside of Africa if you are running a private school in the continent.

If you're an African person growing up in a rural Africa right now, your chance, they're very, very limited. That's what I recall, we decided to create something fundamental, which is really a gift to the continent, a digital time platform, I can share that with you if you want now.

It is a massive gift to the continent and we'll launch it on the 28th of April, and it is one of the largest digital platforms in the world for the African continent and for all girls growing up in marginalized communities whereas a young girl now we can sit down, learn how to code, four coding languages in 12 weeks.

The reason why it is important to talk about this, in this platform, only 28th of April, be get so many organizations talking about ICT, digital literacy, young Women and Girls code, so many networks, but it is not going to help the young girl who is now 15, 17, 18 years old in Africa.

Our platform, it will be -- it will be just doing that. So you can now go into the platform and learn how to code, get your lab, test your code, get your certification, and be mentored by top coders in the world.

This is so important right now for to us have the conversation, and we can create as many networks to create onus around coding, around digital skills, it is very good, very noble. At the fundamental need of the young girl, the young boy growing up across Africa, they need skills equals money, you don't have the skills, you can't get a job. Very search. I wanted to share that quickly. To

emphasize, the conversation, building connections, but making sure that we give the boys and the girls growing up across Africa and across all of the world the tools they need to learn basic coding skills but also make sure that they understand the 21st Century skills so we don't have this conversation about the white man and the person this and it is not about race, gender, it is about making sure systems are provided to boys and girls growing up across the continent and what we do, we're working marginalized communities, we must not take refugees as an escape goat to give our solutions, they're human being, you see the Ukraine crisis right now, we have skilled people looking to get jobs and unless we provide the tools they need to be part of the global workforce, it is not going to work.

I just want to stop there and I would like the 28th of April, the ITU and all of the networks and communities to focus on skills, we need to upskill, reskill young people so that they're to, 22, 23 years old like my sons age, looking for work they can get a job they need.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: Thank you for highlighting the importance of the skills equaling money aspect and I am actually going to talk about the different side that you just mentioned, so that role that -- that organization, the institutions, the politics that play in that, I would bring in Giselle Frederick, the impact tech founder, another founder, also a former delegate to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and you are not only an entrepreneur but an advocate for tech for good and a representative for the Commission on the Status of Women. I would love to hear what are the actions undertaken by this Commission to develop their digital skills so what we just heard about, what role does the Commission play in that?

>> GISELLE FREDERICK:

Thank you so much for having me.

Can you hear me.

I'm happy to be here. Thank you for the invitation.

So I have been in tech for many years, the Youth Forum, youth activism is that I love the most, getting youth engaged to create solutions, better solutions for their future.

There are a few challenges that a lot of young Women and Girls are actually facing when it comes to tech.

Some of which are addressed within the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women.

Some others are actually being experienced at a more cross roots level and they're not yet picked up by the larger organizations such as the U.N., other organizations.

My background is within tech, tech entrepreneurship, I have been through many, many years of innovation and I'm passionate about positive tech, building better, positively impacting communities and finding ways that marginalized, underserved communities can participate in the technology solutions, that includes a large part of my advocacy, it is around getting Women and Girls, especially from minority backgrounds as well involved and engaged.

We have come a long way. It is important to recognize how far we have come. When I entered the tech world, just -- how long -- maybe around 15 years, even 15 years ago we didn't have the number of women in tech that we have now. I'm originally from the Caribbean, but I am also British, so you may hear a little bit of a British accent, when I started my career, and I entered the field of telecom sector, it was only in the early 20s, 20%, they were women in tech. So I think it was around 23, 24%, and since then, over the last ten year, 15 years we have seen that grow to almost 30%. It is not nearly at all equal in terms of main women in tech. .

I think that the growth is positive. There have been a few initiatives that support women getting into tech, various tech fields and some of the bigger barriers that are being addressed, they're actually how that culture, the tech culture, the overall culture, we need to change that culture and the way technology is marketed to women. That's something that is currently happening and we see more role models and more women, the women list, Tom women in tech list, across U.K., Europe regions and it is very positive and we have seen a lot of the toxic culture being addressed, some of it is unfortunately through movements like me too -- not unfortunately, fortunately for the victims, we have had positive movements that is starting to change that toxic culture so women feel a bit more included.

We also have seen the increase in the type of opportunities being advertised. In the past, when you think technology we focused around programming and those area, the data science, but now we're beginning to see all of the adjacent industries marketed as well and being marketed just as much as ding tall marketing, user design, QA, all of these fields are just as important when it comes to tech as well as iPhone, entering tech through innovation, it is also a big area and increases.

There are other issues around the advancement of careers that are being addressed. Women tend to have a natural Paula Hunter to start families, this is something

that we just have to do because our population depend on it, there is nothing we can do about it, we carry the baby, we have to take a break to have the babies and reenter the workforce. What has been happening however, a lot of women have seen their career negatively impacted because of the break and there have been a few stoplights shown on this in the past and in the U.K. I know that we created indexes it help better advance the women that are impacted -- being impacted by the issue, so we have returned programme so that women leaving the workforce, pursuing family, when they come back, essentially it is like a graduate scheme to reenter the workforce and this allows us to capitalize on the skill set that we have within our society and so that the women, they have not just -- they're not just out in the home, but they're able to reenter and to rejoin the workforce at high-level, the level of which they lacked for a little bit higher.

There are also indexes around pay for women, getting access to equal pay. This was another area. Why should I come in, do the work, not be paid or be paid 40% of sat rill that someone else is being paid that sits next to me when I have the exact qualifications, the same skills and contributing just as much to the team. SOP there have been a lot more indexes around that to ensure that women get -- get access to equal pay for the work that they're doing.

Of course, I mentioned before, the other changes, they're the importance of role model, the importance of visible role models is not underestimated, be it women that are senior in technology, be it women that are entrepreneurs, and that made the leap from one industry to another, those are -- it is so important to have those..

The U.N. Commission on the stakes of women have been advocating for quite a lot of these in addition to the education, so rolling out more educational programme, providing more access to women so that they can learn these digital skills so that they can become freelancers and entrepreneurship -- and entrepreneurs in their own rights.

Yeah. These are just some of the things that are being done. It is not at all everything but so toes much more than what was being done previously I would say in the last ten years.

I'm very pleased to see the progress. We're not there yet in terms of parity, equality, but I'm pleasantly surprised by the trends and we're working towards achieving a more equal presence in tech.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: Thank you. That was so

insightful. Now I would like to speak to Lady Marieme Jamme again and ask about -- we have heard about some of the ways of how barrier cans be addressed and also we have heard about the work that has yet to be done. I would love to know what is -- what do you consider to be the biggest barriers for women in tech and also what can youth, what can we do to overcome them? What's our role? That?

>> LADY MARIEME JAMME: That's very good question. There are many, many barriers. First of all, a bigger barrier I see in the world of tech and doing that for 25 years now, it is a very long time, it is the narratives. Right. We're very comfortable in some of the narratives for Women and Girls across the world. We elevate only a few people and then we leave the rest and there are millions of young girls with to access to connectivity, for example, access to content, to infrastructure, but it is our mentality, you know, it is our way of, you know, being comfortable and we probably can train 100 people 2, hundred people, the data doesn't speak to itself. And I see this across the world.

You know, the data issue, how do you measure impact when it comes to Women and Girls being in technology. If you're based in the U.K., here, it is very difficult to, you know, even talk about tech and innovation, only a few people are elevated when it comes to the tech sector.

I go to schools in the U.K. here where I meet young white girls who are probably in private school, in estates, most will not end up doing technology because of the way that STEM, tech is talked about.

When you go to Africa, Senegal, where I come from for example, where many young girls don't have access to devices for example, they don't have access to content, data is very, very expensive for young girls, what they're doing.

We have so many barriers. What we do, in the World Economic Forum, I sit on the Council for Education 4.0, and we have designed a new taxonomy of languages, how do you make sure that we change the narratives around Women and Girls in tech? We also ask how to change the STEM? You know, what's really STEM? What do we mean by STEM? Who actually has access to STEM?

The word STEM, it is used everywhere, in every single report. You know, if you want to get funding, just use the word STEM, code, by all means, you get the funding you need. There is not a lot of impact when it comes to science, technology, engineering, mathematics and we have code and art and design, it is important that we get young

Women and Girls to be part of the art and design processes, if you want to get the next designers in the world, people that are going to be designing social and Climate Change, inequality, peace, justice today, what you see, we have to have young Women and Girls in those sort of rooms. So the entire 21st Century skills need to be redesigned and need to be fruitful. This is how we'll remove the barriers. We have a lot of barrier, a lot of barriers, and I would say that the first thing we need to remove is the language.

Really changing the language of STEM, of women in tech, you know, black girls, code, women girls code, all of that, it is really changing -- it is -- it is actually stopping people progress, you know, a typical example of someone who is not part of the mainstream, I didn't have degrees in Oxford, all of these PhD nonsense, you know, I Learn How To Code 7 coding language, it is two years as I said earlier. I'm a full staff developer. I spend all of my time designing solutions for the world.

Important that we think of the girl sitting in the refugee camp in Kenya, that she can be a coder. A refugee is not written on her back. She can learn how to code and sit down and really develop an app, a website without no one knowing she's from South Sudan. It is very important that we change the narratives and make sure we're more inclusive and educate ourselves in what's happening across the world and finally, remove the barrier, it is to collaborate, really, really to collaborate and learn from our peers and really understand that the world of tech, innovation, it has no gender, no age, no race, you know, no class, no one owns it, you just need to know how to code and you can build anything you like. That's one of the barriers we can take up.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: Thank you so much for highlighting the importance of changing the narrative and how we use our language.

I would love to speak about another issue that we kind of touched upon which is power dynamics. The fact that we have the existing narrative, it is also because the people -- because an exclusive group designed the narrative.

Now I would actually like to ask this question, to give it to Mauricia Abdol Tshilunda. What can you say about the potential and role of tech and redistributing power more equally and also how we as young women, but also maybe just not highlighting this very aspect, how can we contribute to making that happen?

>> MAURICIA ABDOL TSHILUNDA: I love that question. It

is exciting to think about the fact that we get to change. Right. That we get to be in the forefront of it.

Wow. I have quite a few ideas rambling around in my head. I want us to think together, this is not silos to just as Welcoming up with innovative solution, but really everyone, this is -- when it comes to being actively involved in making technology more accessible to women in remote area, making sure that whatever your background might be, it does not impute on your ability to access technological innovations and making it work for you is key in making sure that -- yeah, it is key in the question.

Another point that I think, it is very important for all innovator, whether male or female. Develop the solution to be relevant, to who you are developing it for. Think about, imagine, see a young woman who has -- girl, boyars young children, but she has initiatives to take care of in, a rural community, she would need to travel for one, two, three hours just to get to an Internet connection. How can your solution cut down on her travel distance she needs to take where she can be at home for example and still get the same accessibility that she would have had to travel three hours to reach and still see to everything else she has to see to culturally in her household. Right.

We need to make sure that we have solutions that understand the need first before we think of making it look pretty, attractive.

We need to develop technology that responds to the practicality of the situation of our young people in rural communities.

A thing, in my closing, I would say, technology trumps distance. Technology trumps barriers that historically would have kicked us out of the loop. That historically would have meant that no solution was possible or solutions are only for a few women in the communities.

When looking -- technology really will and is changing the narrative within our communities. What we need to do in going forward, making sure that it is relevant, that it is speaking to the needs specifically, and know that needs differ geographically. Right. Whenever we're developing a solution for a community, first understand the need of that community and then develop around that.

We cannot generically copy and paste our solutions widespread, just as it is, so remember speak to the need and make sure that -- gosh. There are so many points. Make sure you have the human in mind. Make sure you understand who you are speaking to, that simple and -- I'm thinking simple is sometimes better than having a lot of

information that could confuse or overwhelm who you are seeking to serve. Think of having a slim, simple solution that can address the need so more quality, less quantity when it comes to elevations going forward.

Thank you so much.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: I have been taking so many notes, you said so many great things. Quality over quantity, just speaking to the need and staying relevant and actually addressing the issues of our time.

I would actually love to ask you a follow-up question just because you basically just addressed that very issue, but the differing needs that we have geographically, how do we strengthen awareness for that aspect, how do we make sure that it is not -- how do we raise awareness for it, for what you have just described?

>> MAURICIA ABDOL TSHILUNDA: I have learned engagement is key.

One thing, whenever we take any solution that we feel can serve a community into a certain space we make sure that in all of our communication strategies that the community is part and parcel of it and involved from the word go.

Once you make sure that you understand the community and how they function then identify key actors within the community to contribute towards your developmental team, many of the women, the young men in the various communities that we serve, they're keen to get involved, they just don't know how.

The minute you can say, bring them on board, you say, listen, this is what we would love serve you with, this is the solution that we're looking to develop, how will this serve your community? What do you see as relevant? Sometimes the way we envision a solution, assisting the community, it is not necessarily how they would see that very same solution serving their community.

Having them see the innovation, getting involved from the word go, and then have -- have them find out what they see.

If you're creating a reading app, what do they use the reading app for in the community. Maybe it would be to communicate the various stories that they have self-developed, we have many storytellers that don't have the platform to communicate from.

From the get-go, collaborate with the community, find out what they see and then go from there. Go from there.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: Thank you so, so, so much.

I also want to say something that kind of comes to

mind when you speak of the slogan of nothing about us without us, again, that kind of captures what you have just said. Priya Burci, I would love to speak to you again. Now we have spoken of that issue of visibility so often, and obviously all of you create visibility, all of you have become that kind of role model that we're speaking about.

So Priya, you have been part of the -- one of the mentioned lists of Successful Women Under 30 on Elle, all of these lists can be so, so, so crucial just to create visibility because at the end of the day you can't be what you can't see. Right.

Just from your position, I would love to hear maybe you could also touch upon like the challenges you personally had to overcome but my main focus would be do you have any advice for people, young women, who want to follow your path? Who have seen your work and now think now I can also be someone who works in this field?

>> PRIYA BURCI: Yeah. Definitely.

I think when it comes to advice, challenges faced, I think the speakers before me make really important points about access and equal access. I think that's a really important challenge to keep in mind.

In terms of -- yeah, the advice I would give, I would say that is sort of maybe one of the bigger challenges I face, I think a lot of women in tech face, it is not exclusive to that group, but is this feeling of impostor syndrome, and I think it is -- yeah, I don't think it is limited to women in tech or social entrepreneurs that are women. The social norms, structure, stigma, it's definitely a role that's disposed towards that, you know, building a sense of imposter syndrome and I think that's something that I personally have experienced, and it very much limits your ability to be super confident, make quick decisions, you know, take risks, and I think that is an advice I would have for young women wanting to enter the tech sector, to be aware that that's something that everyone feels and to really try and I think first thing note, to self-reflect, you know, say maybe I'm feeling less than, not confident enough, thinking that I'm -- that I don't do serve this position because of my skills, and actually to really recognize that, you know, imposter syndrome, it is very common.

Then I would very much highlight the importance of communities, so sort of women supporting each other, and celebrating successes and I think that's where visibility comes in as well.

Also understanding that, you know, your achievements

never will be perfect, no matter how high the expectations of the sector are.

Yeah, one thing that's been very helpful for me, it is that, you know, when I'm stuck on a decision, I feel, you know, a strong sense of imposter syndrome, I ask myself what's the worst that could happen if I get this decision wrong or, you know, I may necessary up a little bit and, you know, the answer is never as extreme or anxiety inducing as I feel at that moment. That's very helpful, you know, bar if I get this wrong I will die, it is worth, you know, just going forward, making the decision, learning from it if you do get it wrong. You can't expect perfection from yourself, you can't expect always to sort of reach a level of success that proves that you're good enough, you are sort of doing important work and I think that's really important to keep in mind.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: Thank you so much for speaking of the impostor syndrome and, yeah, I would love to -- I love that we have addressed kind of the individual level, but also the structural level that we have talked about before and actually I want to go back to the structural level again.

I will speak to you, Giselle.

You have heard what some of the speakers have mentioned, and identified as their main challenge, barriers that they have identified.

I would also love to hear your perspective and specifically understanding do you feel that those exact challenges and barriers are sufficiently represented and actually do they align with the issues that are represented at, for example, the Commission on the Status of Women.

Is there -- is there a discrepancy, does it actually overlap.

I would love to hear your perspective on that.

>> GISELLE FREDERICK: I think a lot of the challenges are represented I would say. Challenges in terms of connectivity, challenges in terms of education and getting the skill set, getting access to the resources, to the devices as well as nurturing the women as women and as entrepreneurs. These are all areas that are being -- that I think are genuine -- well, of course, they're genuine, they're being brought out by the women experiencing them, the tech and the problems. There are areas that are often highlighted and marketed and there are areas that are being addressed.

I think in terms of other areas, I think we can definitely do a bit more around some often marginalized

communities, not just in let's say Africa, but in Europe as well.

One of -- I think it was Lady Marieme Jamme that mentioned teaching women to code in refugee camp, we have this massive problem now, where we have a lot of -- in Ukraine, we have a lot of people fleeing Ukraine, a lot of them would need access to the job market in Europe. We can focus a bit more on some of the areas, some of the communities that are disadvantaged, in Europe as well, and I think it is not all about the disadvantaged elsewhere, and although I think it is obviously very important. I think Lady Marieme Jamme is speaking about her community that she's coming from, and there are so many of these little pockets of communities across Eastern Europe that need support and we can bring those women into the workplace and we can provide them with access to the education that they need, the skills that they need so that they can lead a better life and get access to the resources to make their lives a bit better.

I think these are -- we need to shed light on some of those areas across Europe as well.

We are doing well on some perspectives, and in others we're not doing so well. We're focused on others and I think we can do more to shed light on some of the problems here if that makes sense.

>> ANTONIA BASKAKOV: That make as whole lot of sense. Thank you.

I feel we have covered so many topics and issues from visibility, structural barriers, individual challenges and possible solutions and we have -- I have been lucky enough to ask all of you these questions and I would now love to open the floor for others to potentially ask questions.

With that, I would give back the Celia who will moderate that part of the discussion.

Thank you so much, once again.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you very much for this great session moderation, Antonia Baskakov.

I want to also thank all of the speakers for your great insights, great messages you have been leaving and how you have gained different perspectives as you have come from also different continent, not just European continent. We can also address the issues and challenges and activities that you're taking in those places.

First of all, as you all know, the topic of the international girls of ICTs this year, it is regarding access and safety. We have already touched upon this topic a little bit.

I would like to address directly to Lady Marieme Jamme if she can extend a bit her opinion on this topic and give us meaningful insights.

Please, Lady Marieme Jamme, the floor is yours.

>> LADY MARIEME JAMME: Thank you so much. All of the speakers, and Gisselle, everyone.

I think when I joined these calls, people expect for me to be very optimistic and I apologize if I sound, you know, pessimistic. It is not good out there for boys and girls. I do apologize if you were expecting something rosy from my side.

I think one of the biggest things we should really think about, when we have this big activities across the world, addressing young Women and Girls, you know, we're all going to become adults and women leading the world. When it comes to the girls ICT day, which ITU organized so beautifully, I think this is the time right now for us to be more transparent and honest in what's going to happen.

When COVID started, I was in a refugee camp in Kenya, we have to think of a refugee camp with over 200,000 people that lives there and the entire African continent has over 500,000 people who are refugees, they're from South Sudan, other areas, it is terrible of a place for a young girl to grow up. So today when you woke up, you probably had the sanitation, tea, water, breakfast, everything you want because you are privileged like me. I had hot water this morning. I had a shower this morning.

The girls I'm talking to, they don't have access to this. Right. Number one. Number two, connectivity is so expensive for those girls all across the world. The Ukraine girls, my girls in Ukraine, right now, they're in Poland and in Belgrade, because for the last two months, because if you think about eight weeks, their lives have been turned upside down, and they're really in difficult situations. I think we have a massive opportunity as a world to think about Women and Girls' mental, all across the world. Education, it is not just an African problem, a global problem. Connectivity, connectivity, having every single day when you wake up, having access to your mobile phone, going on WhatsApp, Instagram, on Facebook, it is a privilege. My girls are being vie lighted because of connectivity, they have to exchange sex, they have to be violated verbally, physically, they have to be blackmailed, bullied, groomed to have access to the Internet. Can you imagine? This is the truth.

So the second component, it is the safety.

The safety of young Women and Girls is at stake. So

we can talk about coding, skills as much as we like, globally this day, as we celebrate, what we really need to think about is what can we do to invest in infrastructure, in content, connectivity, meaningfully support young Women and Girls. If you are 11 years old today, you'll become a 21-year-old girl, you're going to be a 31-year-old women, you'll be a 41 years old women, like me, I'm 47 years old.

So society let me down when I was 11 years old. I'm now 47 years old. So we need to think about time, time is absolutely critical as we invest and as we look forward, the ITU is looking at the Sustainable Development Goals by 230, eight years from now, if we don't invest in young Women and Girls' safety it is going to be very difficult for us. All of the amazing speakers that spoke today, all of the wonderful women that are elevating young Women and Girls, making sure that everyone as good connectivity, infrastructure, content, platform, spaces, connection, network, just name it! Unless we as a community of good willing people, we put humanity at the centre of innovation, we're not going to be there. This is my call today to all leaders, to really make sure that we invest in South Africa, in Kenya, Senegal, wherever you are, in Ukraine, in Belgrade, wherever you are in the world, wherever you are in the world, please, if you're listening to this message today you have to invest in young women and in young girls. The ITU -- I'm a very lucky person to sit on the Board of The ITU young global vision, it is very important that we invest today, I would say it one more time, you have to invest in young Women and Girls growing up all across the world. That's my message for what it is in this ITU girls ICT day, 2022.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you very much, Lady Marieme Jamme, for this impressive message. I think you've dressed very important, very streamed topic that sometimes we just -- it is just about talking, but in this topic, it is not just about talking but acting, taking action and all of the persons that are all here, we have this connectivity, we have digital resources making them possible for other girls, for other young people that they are completely unprotected, they're all out there.

We need -- there is -- I'm -- I have -- really, it was very impressive, the message. Thank you very much.

We will address this topic for sure in the international regional day of Girls in ICTs and we will share this message so even more people can listen and always repeat it and repeat it until at one point I really believe that by people like you, like all of us here, we'll

make the change that we want to see for the girls that now they're 11 but I hope when they were 31, some people they cared about me, made the change, now I have a better life than I was supposed to have.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you very much for that message. We'll share it on the 28th of April so more people can listen to it. Thank you very much, really.

We also have 5 more minutes for one more question.

I know Caterina wanted to ask a question. Please, I see your hand raised. The floor is yours. Go ahead.

>> CATARINA SIGNORINI: This is for Mauricia Abdol Tshilunda.

First of all, thank you for your wonderful, insightful speech, and I'm really impressed. It was really exciting, and so thank you for being here.

I wanted to ask you, when young girls learn that they can make a difference and change is possible, what are the attitudes to these difficult things, are they more optimistic or a change in the attitude towards this?

>> MAURICIA ABDOL TSHILUNDA: That's a fantastic question. The answer to my delight is yes!.

When the parameter of the young girls change, they're almost ignited for action. They want to know, okay, how can I use my -- this is a new found power, how decide use the power I have now, the skills I have now, the connections I have now to make more opportunities available for my friends, for my communities, for my cousin who is -- you know, a year younger than me, whatever the case, we call them our juniors, but one thing I can just reiterate, it is a resounding yes. Once the young women are activated, once they get the skills, the information, once they're connected, they want to go, they want to go. They want to know what -- where can I influence and what can I do? Many girls for that matter.

>> CATERINA: Thank you very much.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you for your answer.

I'm very pleased.

I would like to address everyone else from the audience, if you have more question, please feel free to take the floor or write them in the chat so I can address them.

Otherwise, if I can see nobody is raising their hands or posting nothing in the chat, I think we can say thank you once again to all of the speakers, to Antonia Baskakov for moderating this, Lady Marieme Jamme, Mauricia Abdol Tshilunda, Priya Burci and Giselle Frederick, it was a pleasure to have all of these great young women, powerful

women and very impressive women today with us.

You have lived a very insightful -- we're privileged to have the messages here. Thank you for the contributions. We'll hopefully stay in touch for the next sessions for the Girls in ICTs day and whatever the future brings that we can address attention on this topic, on this interesting topic. Thank you, everyone, for participating.

Now I will leave the floor to Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder so we can have some closing remarks. Please, Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder, the floor is yours.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Celia.

Thank you to all colleague, congratulations to all envoys who are working passionately on making that event so colorful and so inspiring. I stayed connected the whole event, listened to you will of a the conversations in order to be able to take notes on the suggestions which we have to take into account while we are implementing at the regional level and when we're planning some activities and while we're discussing with policymakers in making the digital future much more adaptive to the needs of the young generations.

Also, thank you a lot to the Excellency Giselle Frederick, Deputy Minister of Transport and Communication from Republic of Lithuania, Sabrina Vorbau, our Chairman from the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2020 and who is the member of the Romania Chamber of Romania and their presence. It means a lot. We have a direct link to those who are really designing the policymaking. And also, of course, congratulations to the European Commission especially for launching an amazing initiative on the European Year of Youth to which our event, today's event, it is contributing with that outcome. Thank you very much for all of you for providing so many observations during these three sessions. We have one focused on engagement, second on the youth voices and quality of education and digital future and then the finally last session which we have just had on the gender.

So we learned about the mechanism for meaningful youth involvement in the policymaking, the challenges that could be faced, and what solutions could be proposed to achieve meaningful contribution from the youth, to the youth, and beyond that, and one of the main takeaways of the panel is having the youth at the roundtable of the decision making, it should be a must, not just a nice to have. This is something that we're trying to implement, this is not easy, the institutional setup, they're learning, myself, I was passionately young employee of the U.N. system when we were

introducing the multistakeholder approach. So ready to do this step, it took some time to recognize the need of the multistakeholder, in any kind of decision making process, and this is similar to this, what we're trying to achieve together on the youth engage. Participation and we hope that it will continue.

We analyzed the meaningful of the equality education could be delivered and what role ICT could and should play to be the cohesive, inclusive digital future where ICTs leveraged for the benefit of everyone and the key outcome has been the fact that to achieve the connectivity that will allow young people to have access to the quality education, a solid communication structure is needed and, therefore, together with well-prepared teachers and trainers it would create the fully fledged value proposition and we have to work on that.

Finally, during the last session we had a great chance to hear the contributions from successful female leaders in private sector and that have brought concrete results in the fields of ICT and how they are contributing to achieve gender equality in this tech field. One of the main takeaways during this session, it is that over the last years the growth of women in tech has been positive, it has been positive, but we are yet -- not yet where we should be. More needs to be done and it is crucial to raise attention on this topic, present role models and contributors to achieving real equality and inclusion in this ecosystem encouraging girls to start their path in STEM and ICTs.

Dear colleagues, many different ideas, a lot of inspiration, we hope you will be following our activities and also to contribute, don't hesitate to reach out to us to take a look at how the youth could even more be engaged in the European activities of our office but also those activities going beyond the boundaries of the Europe and I would like to take the moment to thank especially those who are coming from the other regions who brought also the perspective of the other regions because very often being in Europe and enjoying a lot of privileges of the developed economies we forget that the world doesn't look like that everywhere and so thank you very much for that. We should build upon those suggestions.

To conclude, dear colleagues, I stand once again -- extend many thanks to the speakers, moderators for the contributions and relevant experience you have brought to this table today, your motivation and commitments resonate strongly in us and demonstrate once more that the

engagement of the youth at the high-level discussion of the decision making process is today more necessary than ever before. I would like to convey a special thanks to the Generation Connect Europe group for organizing this event and to our session moderators, Andreea, Andrei, Antonia, our technical moderator Rose, thank you for supporting us today and making this event run smoothly, as well as the captioner as well as to our youth facilitator in our team, Celia Falcon, who has been passionately guiding you, us, also our community how to engage and to participate. Congratulations, Celia, for such a great event.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Before I'm wishing you wonderful day, of course, a few reminder, please make sure that you are part of the Generation Connect, please make sure that you are not missing the celebration of Girls in ICTs and contributing to this process, and also please don't miss many of the different updates coming from the youth, Youth Envoys of the Europe region and the other regions as well who are sharing and engaging the others to let the community grow.

We hope that you are becoming a part of the change and from today on you will be feeling as the Youth Ambassadors worldwide, thank you very much and with this I thank you for this great event.

Over to you, Celia.

>> CELIA FALCON: Thank you very much, Jaroslaw Ponder, for your nice words for this impressive outcome remarks.

Just yes, to follow-up with your message, I think that these events we managed to create, bringing all of these interesting people together worldwide, not just in Europe but different continents helped us gain a meaningful insight on what our youth is doing, not only in Europe, but after architectural frameworks Asia, everywhere in the world, it is important to have the cohesive message so we're part of the change and the insight you gave that the process of including youth in the U.N., in the highest spheres of the policymaking, it is a process, it is something that everyone has in mind and that people like you are working for. I feel very pleased to be part of this and to be part of your team.

Thank you, too, for allowing us to make this great event with you for our youth and also thank you for the Generation Connect because this is your event, something that we have created together but basically because of you. Thank you very much.

Have a great day, everyone! Let's stay in contact for the future events, I'm sure there will be a lot, and very

meaningful too! Thank you very much!.

Have a nice day, everyone!

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much!

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