

Your Excellency President Laura Chinchilla

Distinguished guests....

Ladies and Gentlemen, and all the young people from all over the world.

It is nice to see so many young talents here in San Jose, who want to make a difference in the world by harnessing the power of communications technology.

I have travelled to this summit with a wonderful delegation of young people from across Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

The work they have done and the things they have achieved are an inspiration to me.

Young people bring with them the promise of a better future.

The ideas of the young generation,

will help solve the problems of today, and build the solutions of tomorrow.

Yet I often feel that –as companies and societies – we need to do a better job of listening to young people, and understand their wants and needs.

I often think of my own children when I address this topic.

They are ambitious people, who want to get ahead.

But more than that, they want to do good.

They want to ensure their society is a better place because of their efforts.

I hear this ambition whenever I speak to young people.

Their energy and enthusiasm will change societies for the better, and are already forcing communications companies to evolve.

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My company, Ooredoo, works in markets that are predominately youth markets.

In Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, more than half of our customers are under 25.

These communities are very different, with different traditions, beliefs and cultures.

Yet, when we speak to our young customers, there is a remarkable meeting of minds that cuts across international boundaries.

Young people are connected all the time to mobile devices, and view access to mobile technology as an essential right on par with housing and food.

Young people are also ambitious, using their mobile phones and social media to enhance their daily lives.

However, youth face many challenges.

For example, youth may not have easy access to education or healthcare.

But most pressing of all – youth are facing high unemployment rates in a rapidly-changing world.

Young people want and expect communication companies, to provide them with the tools to support human growth and help them find purpose in their lives.

We need to look at real-life social problems, and find technology solutions.

We need to make these solutions accessible, affordable and scalable, so that everyone can benefit.

As a result, from Indonesia to Algeria, we are supporting a wide variety of life-enhancing products and services, including career counseling services, incubators and start-up services.

We are using technology to create opportunities to help people get ahead.

However, a proactive approach is not enough. We need to listen and learn.

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Our young customers have a great deal to teach us.

We must have the will to benefit from their ideas.

One key example is Tunisia, where our company Tunisiana operates.

Youth face an extremely high unemployment rate of almost 30 percent, and are eager to find a job, make a contribution to their country, and get ahead in life.

Recognizing that mobile technology can help young people reach job opportunities and acquire the right qualifications, we listened to Tunisian youth, and partnered with the Tunisian government, civil society organizations, educators, businesses, to develop and launch the region's first career-related mobile-service called “Najja7ni Employment”.

Najja7ni in Arabic means ‘make me successful’.

The service supports youth employability and financial awareness.

It offers job matching, a mobile market place, and links with local training opportunities.

In three short months, more than 300,000 customers have signed up for the service.

Young people are able to improve their interview skills, polish their CVs and learn more about how the world works.

This service helps as a tool for education and training, allowing people to gain the qualifications they need to take the next step in their career, or business venture.

This is helping people into employment today.

But young people everywhere have more concerns than just their jobs.

They believe in social progress.

Across our footprint, we're connecting underserved communities for the first time, to cutting-edge 3G and 4G networks.

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We're rolling-out life enhancing value-added services – from empowering women to helping youth stay connected to their friends and family.

These are complemented by on-the-ground corporate social responsibility programs, such as medical aid and youth support .

While we have always sought to deliver life-enhancing products and services, our goal has taken-on a new meaning with our global transformation over the past year.

Each of our operations around the world is taking on a bold new identity.

We chose our name Ooredoo, which means “I want” in Arabic or ‘Kiero’ in Spanish to reflect the aspirations of largely youthful customers.

The challenge for communication companies is that we need to stay ahead and listen to the needs of our young customers.

Even as society speeds up, we need to be bold and find new ways to use technology to empower the next generation.

To that end, I am proud to announce that Ooredoo has conducted a substantial research project focusing on youth and technology across the Middle East and North Africa.

We will be unveiling the full research in a few weeks, and it offers an extensive insight into the attitudes of young people across the region.

This research is looking at the use and impact of the internet on their everyday lives.

We will share the full findings when we publish our report.

I would encourage all of you to review what we found and compare that to your own experiences.

From across our footprint, our delegation here includes technology thought leaders and young innovators.

From Indonesia, Hety and Andry ;

From Kuwait, Abdullah and Khalid, who are driving mobile innovation at Wataniya.

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From Iraq, Rawaz who has built his own robot and a web application developer Botan.

From Oman, we have business persons Fatma and Nader;

and, From Algeria, web developers Kacem and Sahraoui.

From Qatar, Hassan and Asma demonstrate the fruits of our company support, as Ooredoo helped them complete their university studies and are now developers in the company.

And I would like to mention also, the delegation of young talented Qataris brought by Qatar's telecom regulator and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

And we should not forget the young Palestinians and Yemenis hosted by Silatech, a social organization from Qatar which is supporting youth employability across the Middle East.

These are our **customers** of the future.

These are the **people** who will change their societies for the better.

These are the **people** we need to be supporting.

I challenge the communications sector to do a better job in supporting, learning from, and developing services for our young customers.

To the young people here today, I say, keep striving, keep dreaming and keep demanding that we improve and deliver more for you.

We all need to be bolder and more creative.

It is your imagination that will empower us to improve.

Thank you, Muchas Gracias y Buenas Noches