

# **Generation Connect Global Youth Summit**

**Opening ceremony, 2 June 2022**

**Video message**

**Mariya Gabriel**

**European Commissioner for Innovation, Research,  
Culture, Education and Youth**

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Dear Minister Ingabire, dear ladies and gentlemen, dear young people,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to today's Generation Connect Global Youth Summit 2022. I would like to thank Minister Paula Ingabire for the kind invitation for me to address all of you today.

Dear Minister, I'm impressed by your work and efforts to make Africa a hub for innovation and digitalisation, and I believe it has the potential to be exactly that. You have a strong supporter in me.

I am certain that this summit will give all participants the opportunity to focus on meaningful youth engagement, consultation, empowerment, participation and calls for action. You will get the chance to brainstorm how technologies can be harnessed to advance progress towards the sustainable development goals, to discuss how the power of technology can change the world [to] build back better.

I believe this is the right place to present the unfolding of the European Year of Youth. Here in front of you, our young innovators, entrepreneurs and future leaders. It is a unique opportunity to exchange ideas about the challenges that lay ahead of us and to listen to young people's ideas about how we can overcome those challenges. To listen, but also to give voice. This is precisely the overarching message for the European Year of Youth: Voice Your Vision.

We have recently launched a voice platform through which young people are able, in their own language, to make their voice heard and express themselves on topics that are passionate about. The European Youth portal is the other place to get involved. Everyone can find information on the latest youth related initiatives and projects and participate in activities. You can even upload your own events and promote them. I invite you to take a look, see what interests you the most, and organize your own event in which, together with your peers, you can discuss the issues you are passionate about, from the green and digital transition to sustainable development, innovation and entrepreneurship.

In the end, it is all about the connections you make with each other and other young people across the world. And we need to make sure that you have the power to put this engagement to good use, to be able to act, to be empowered. This is why, today's summit focuses on the role of technologies. Technology allows us to do more, to go further. It connects us even when we are far. It helps us leverage more weight than we ever could on our own. We need it if we are to achieve the sustainable development goals, if we are to make our societies greener, more inclusive, more digital. It is clear we are entering a new era of digitalization. However, new technologies cannot replace

people to people contact. We have to take into account everyone's needs so that everyone has access to the education they need.

To achieve this, we need to work together in partnership to mobilize and share resources, to ensure there is adequate equipment and to strengthen the connectivity between students, teachers and schools across the world. We are living in unprecedented times, but only by investing in digital education and skills can we succeed. I strongly urge you to seize the momentum.

This is a call for action to you young people to engage. Because we need you, we need you to shape together with us the future of the digital transformation. We in turn, are here to support you. Thank you.