

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, the youth of Rwanda and that of the world.

Alsalam Alaikom, Greetings, and of course, **Muraho**.

Many of youth today, including us here physically or virtually will make many difficult decisions in our life. The most difficult but also the most important of these questions are

- (1) Who am i? (what is my purpose)
- (2) Who I surround myself with?
- (3) What will I do (what is my career)
- (4) the one I think the most important and most difficult for young people today is **how can I get there?****

Because to be frank, while 50% of the world's population are approximately less than 30 years of age, the challenges faced by young people today are varied and plentiful and this was prior to the pandemic. With COVID-19 changing many constants today, the question of how can I get there becomes even more critical

There are, however, silver linings and good things in all situations no matter how difficult they are. In fact, all of you are here, despite the challenges you faced, it did not stop you from pushing further to better your career. And if you are, like me asking myself, how can I get there? I have some good news for you. The ITU team, the event sponsors, and the Generation Connect Visionaries Board have spent time, effort, and resources to making sure each one of us today can answer one or all of the questions.

- (1) And for those who are always evolving, learning, and continuously discovering yourselves; you will get the opportunity to test your likes, dislikes, and purpose here in the next few days.
- (2) For those who want to surround themselves with the right network, there are more than 800+ young people here to learn from, to mentor and to befriend.
- (3) For those who want to learn about what you do and career, there are multiple sessions and networking events to understand your career interest.

I would like to end, with a thank you to the ITU team for putting this amazing event together, to the ITU leadership for partnering with young people in the creation of the event, I also would like to thank the Generation Connect Board for providing feedback and advocacy on behalf of young people everywhere. I would like to thank Youth, whether you are here or joining us physically, your gain and accomplishment is the foundation for an equitable future. Finally, I would like to thank the generous Rwandan people for their warm welcome and hospitality. You have made this event truly special and, in my language, we say '**Shukran Jazeelan**'