

## **WTDC Remarks**

// 6 June 2022 – Ellen Taylor

Good morning. My name is Ellen Taylor and I am a 23 year old student from Canada. In 2021, I had the opportunity to develop and participate in the creation of the Youth Summit and Call to Action document. This experience has been incredible.

I would like to begin today by introducing myself in a broader context. I am the youth of the world in 2022. I am the first generation of digital natives and carry the voices of many different young people around the world – community workers, entrepreneurs, researchers, students, and young professionals from various backgrounds from all regions.

I was born in an era of unprecedented technology innovation and disruption. As I come of age, I want to be able to enjoy the digital world fully, safely, and inclusively.

You, decision makers around the world, have been the digital pioneers. You carry the power and the responsibility to accelerate digital development everywhere for all and build on it towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda.

The time to act is now. At stake is my very future.

Your Excellency, I have here a Call to Action titled “My Digital Future.” This document represents the voices of over 420 young people from around the world and it was developed over the past few months through online consultations. Following these online consultations, it was revised and finalized over the past weekend at the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit. The call to action I hold in my hands addresses several areas of action that leaders can take to deliver meaningful connectivity for youth. While there are many important details represented in this document, there are a few main takeaways I would like to emphasize. Firstly, my peers and I would like to encourage leaders to engage youth in meaningful decision-making opportunities. Youth (those under the age of 30) represent 50% of our global population, yet we are consistently underrepresented and ignored in places where decisions are made about us without us. Secondly, my peers and I would like to encourage leaders to help create and support youth-led initiatives between the ITU and other UN organizations. As I saw at the Youth Summit, young people are more than able to inspire and empower those around them to tackle complex problems that will improve our collective future, but we need your support. Lastly, my peers and I would like to encourage you to collaborate with different communities, such as the private and public sector, academia, and civil society to open pathways for sustainable digital development.

This call to action that holds the aspiration of young people for decisive actions by global leaders in digital policies, governance in the digital age, youth engagement for the future, transforming education & building digital skills, creating decent jobs and livelihoods for youth and transforming culture and communities. This is our call to action; we count on your listening ear.

It is not a coincidence that the Youth Summit was held directly before this World Telecommunication Development Conference. The meaningful and equitable inclusion of youth, who are digital natives, must continue to be discussed and emphasized at this conference. As a member of the Canadian delegation, I will continue to advocate for youth, particularly young women and youth from marginalized communities, during WTDC discussions. We cannot afford to dismiss young voices anymore; our digital future is today.

Thank you