

World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022

Partner2Connect Roundtables

Opening Session

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- Good afternoon, good morning, good evening,
- It is a pleasure to welcome to officially open the long awaited **Partner2Connect Digital Development Roundtable**.
- It is also an honour for me to share the stage with:
 - **The Honorable Minister Paula Ingabire**, our host, whose support and leadership have been fundamental to getting all of us here together.
 - Assistant Secretary-General and Acting UN Tech Envoy **Maria Francesca Spatolisano**, who has been a true partner and believer in P2C since its origins, when it was nothing more than an idea, an aspiration, and
 - **Juliana Novaes**, from our Generation Connect Visionaries Board, who is here representing our youth – an element that has been a constant and powerful ingredient in the success of P2C thus far.
- Yesterday, ITU released the **Global Connectivity Report**.
- The number of internet users has surged from just a few **million to almost 5 billion over the past 30 years**.

- And yet, the report tells us that the **potential of digital connectivity** remains largely untapped.
- Why?
- Because **2.9 billion people have never used the Internet.**
- And among those **who are online**, hundreds of millions **do not enjoy** the kind of connectivity that many of us take for granted.
- **Meaningful connectivity** for all has become the **new imperative** in the Decade of Action.
- The **UN Secretary General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation**, and his ‘Our Common Agenda’ report released last year, **recognize connectivity as a basic foundational element to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.**
- And this is the time.. the perfect time... for us to move from **vision and collective will...into action.**
- **It is in this spirit** that last fall, we launched the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition.
- P2C is a **multistakeholder, action-oriented** alliance to foster **meaningful connectivity and digital transformation** globally, in the hardest-to-connect communities,with a focus on but not limited to LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.
- Together with our:
 - **Knowledge Partner, BCG**
 - the **19 Focus Area Leaders,**

- and the support of over **200 organizations** that constituted our Working Groups

we developed the **P2C Action Framework**, and our pledging platform to mobilize new resources, partnerships and commitments across the areas of ACCESS, ADOPTION, VALUE CREATION and ACCELERATED investment.

- We also successfully conducted a series of **four Web Dialogues** in Katowice, New York and Geneva.
- **We welcomed amazing panelists** and thousands of people following us **onsite** and **online**, preparing the ground for what will be unveiled over the next two and a half days here in Kigali.
- The **Digital Development Roundtable** we are about to kick off is a **milestone in the history of ITU**.
- This is the **very first time that we have a truly multistakeholder group gathered together and actively participating at WTDC**, through this roundtable dialogue.
- I am happy to share that before even starting this roundtable, we had already received 200 pledges towards connectivity, from over 100 entities, representing 80 countries and more than 60 governments.
- I am **hopeful of seeing many more** pledges and commitments announced between now and Thursday.
- **Our programme** for the next two and a half days will not only showcase and celebrate all current and new P2C pledges at our **ten High-Level Panels**, but also will bring attention to key digital development topics through **five Spotlight sessions**.

- I encourage you to check out the '**P2C Corner**' in the KCC venue, where you can meet others **for partnership building and collaboration** opportunities.
- Thank you again to those here in Kigali, and to those who could not travel but who also pledged and are following us online.
- Every pledge counts.
- Every pledge is a step forward towards our dream of universal, meaningful connectivity.
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- I wish you all a very successful roundtable, many memorable moments in Kigali, and multiple opportunities to **partner to connect the world**.
- Thank you.