

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**VIDEO MESSAGE FOR THE ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION  
DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE: CONNECTING THE UNCONNECTED  
TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Kigali, 6 June 2022**

I am pleased to greet the World Telecommunication Development Conference.

My thanks to the Government of Rwanda for hosting.

The potential of digital technologies to help us make up lost ground towards the Sustainable Development Goals is tremendous.

But so too are the challenges.

Over one third of humanity still has no access to the internet.

This digital divide reinforces social, economic and gender divides. It exacerbates inequalities in all dimensions – from urban and rural, from literacy to healthcare, from childhood to older age.

Your task is to map out a new Action Plan to bring the nearly 3 billion unconnected people into our global digital community – because leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline.

The Kigali Action Plan must put humanity back at the centre of technology.

Your discussions will inform next year's United Nations Summit of the Future and the Global Digital Compact that I proposed in my report on *Our Common Agenda*.

The Compact will bring together governments, the private sector and civil society to agree on key principles for an open, free, and secure digital future for all.

I encourage you to be bold and ambitious and I wish you every success.

Thank you.