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           INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION
               REGIONAL FORUM FOR EUROPE ON
              DIGITAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR
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     >> JAROSLAW PONDER: Ladies and gentlemen, it is 10:04
by me. We're almost on 05. Good morning. Good afternoon
for some of you. Welcome to the ITU Regional Forum for
Europe On Digital Skills Development. My special welcome
goes also to the panelists whom we'll have the pleasure to
hear from shortly. My name is Jaroslaw Ponder and as the
head of the ITU office, it's my great pleasure to open this
event on behalf of the ITU and to moderate some of the
sessions together with Ana who is also a part of the team
of the Europe office.
     Before we are starting our session and event, I would

like to hand over the floor to our technical moderator who will share with us some housekeeping information. The floor is yours.

>> Sorry about that. So I will read the guidelines. Dear participants, my name is Luiza, and I will be remote participation moderator for the event. Before starting the meeting, I would like to give you some instruction on the Zoom platform and meeting. So the meeting is entirely remote. The audience is kindly asked to keep their microphones switched off. The moderator of the session will address the speakers and will give you the floor when your turn comes.

You may use the chat for any questions or comments. So please include your name and affiliation to make it easier for the organizing. Organizers will be monitoring. When the floor is open to the audience, please raise your hand to request the floor. The raise hand function is located at the bottom of the participant window. To access the participant window, click the participant button in the bottom bar of the Zoom interface.

You can view and activate the captioning by clicking on the closed caption in the bottom bar of the Zoom interface. We kindly ask you to display your full name and affiliation if possible. Incomplete or suspicious information may cause you to be removed from the meeting room.

The meeting is being recorded and the recording will be used for report writing and communication purpose.

Thank you.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Right. Thank you very much for this information and I would like to inform you that also this event is live streamed on the YouTube channel and the Twitter account. So @ITUeuro and so we encourage you also to share the news during the event about this through your social media but also after the event, when this event will be remaining and therefore the reference.

Today's event's format is very special, and this workshop in particular is taking a look at the possibility of engaging all stakeholders in the work on the -- on the digital skills.

This is the reason why we have also proposed to -- during this event to hold the information laboratory which is the example of the way how we can close or interact between each other and so we identify, ascertain challenges which are relevant to our regional actions but more

importantly, to the national implementation.

After the lunch, as you will see, we will break out to the different groups where we are looking forward to have the clear discussions on the digital skills development with the representatives of the government, private sector and academia and other groups and also to take a look how the products of the ITU, in particular, guidebook on the development of the -- on the digital skills assessment can be of use for different types of stakeholders.

So please be prepared for exciting discussions during the course of today, but before we are starting, we will have also a series of different interventions coming from the regional stakeholders active in the feel of digit -- the field of digital skills but also from the stakeholders who are very much taking a look at this exercise as the opportunity to embark on the journey on strengthening digital skills development at the country level, at the regional level or contributing to the global efforts.

There's no -- it's difficult to deny that digital is our new reality, particularly during the COVID time, and for the ITU, digital is not something new, but its dimension has been so much strengthened during the COVID time that we are taking a look at the, in particular, last year as a great opportunity to accelerate digital transformation and in particular the work on the digital skills which is the fundamental needs to be addressed during the COVID times and any times of the unexpected happening like pandemics.

This is the reason why, let me welcome today so many great speakers and those who are really doing great progress at the country level, also let me thank our colleagues from the ITU who are leading the digital skills work at our level, at the global level, with clear objective to strengthen the preparedness of the countries and to transform the connectivity into the meaningful connectivity that all population can clearly see how and to use the all benefits of the digital space in the daily life.

Before we embark on the first session, I have a great pleasure also to share with you and some highlights of the work which we have carried out under the regional initiative on the digital inclusion, which encompasses the work on the digital skills. We took a look at the possibility of seeing what is the dynamics of the -- in different countries, in particular, focusing on the non-EU

countries. Next slide, please.

Within this context, we tried to take a look following the guidebook, the guides or the recommendations on the assessment of the digital skills development. What is happening in the Albania, Bosnia, Hernandez go Vina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine to serve them at the moment.

We took a look at the macroeconomic conditions, the education, demand and type of digital skills needed, the digital skills gap and the ICT infrastructure. The executive summary has been made on the website, however our journey does not stop there. As I mentioned, the purpose of this exercise was more and to build the community and to build the proper network of those who are working on digital skills and who are committed to advance digital skills.

Next slide. In general, these nine countries are demonstrating a huge potential for the growth, and there is -- in 2019, before the pandemic broke, there was a significant growth in the GDP, however those countries still belong to the low-income countries, which were the digital skills can -- can offer the great unit for scaling up.

Even though there are some strengths like in the competitiveness index comparison that we see, some strength of the countries in -- in respect to the health and primary education, macroeconomic environment, higher education, training and good market efficiency we see that that still has to be done in terms of the technological readiness, or the innovation, which is still evolving.

We have to also take a look at the -- a closer look at the different dynamics in terms of the opportunities for the young people and in particular, focusing on the youth unemployment.

Next slide.

We took a look at a glance what is happening with the digital skills policy and we notice that even though a lot is happening in terms of the developing the national -- the national strategies, but they are general. Digital skills are embedded in the larger or specific items related to the ICT development, should it be the -- the Digital Agendas focusing on the investment of the ICT infrastructure, or the public sector or ICT for education, or government, or the others.

There's only a few, which are taking the digital

skills very much on the high of the priorities, and this situation, which we observed in 2020, is changing and evolving significantly as the countries have noticed a significant interest in making the digital skills as one of the prerequisites of the environment and preparedness for any kind of pandemics.

This is the reason why we stand ready to work with the countries, those in particular who are willing to advance fast to assist them in making the assessment and development of the digital spheres -- digital skills strategies.

We noticed that in many countries, at digital education is one of the priorities. In Albania, for example, ICT for education is part of the national Digital Agenda targeting 100% Internet access for education, equipping schools and embedding ICTs into the teacher training.

In Moldova, digital Moldova includes programs for digital education in compulsory general and continuing education and the inclusion of program digital skills for all.

We see a lot of happening at the level of the implementation.

Next slide. There's a huge demand for different types of skills at the country level, depending on the -- of the type of the country, and also of the availability of ICTs.

The companies, we -- they are screaming for the people and the young professionals who are properly educated and properly deployable corresponding to their needs.

There's a lot of work to be done in terms of the reskilling and the upskilling, as well as in development of the talent acquisition.

Next slide.

This is the reason why we notice a lot of things which need to be closed in terms of the digital gaps and which should be targeted through the harmonized approach of all the region.

We are -- we have also with our investigation took a look, next slide, at the ICT infrastructure taking a look if the ICT infrastructure plays an important role and it does. Even though all countries are on the good path that is being the leader in the digital, we are still remaining mobile society which creates a lot of opportunities but in particular, in the times of pandemics, we notice that not only the access is a challenge, but also the ownership of

the devices becomes a big burden for making the progress in terms of the closing the gaps on the digital skills.

This is a reason why the concentrated assistance to some countries and the special programs developing and ensuring the sustainability of the use and great help to those countries.

So with this highlight, we wanted only to draw your attention to the ongoing work at the ITU level and the discussions we are holding with several countries on the concrete actions that were in the UN system.

But now let me invite you now to the first session of this meeting where I have the great pleasure and privilege to welcome on board, several speakers. It includes Susan Teltscher, the head of the Capacity and Skills Development Division for ITU. Agi Veres, Deputy Regional Director for Europe and CIS Region of the UNDP. And Nina Ferencic, Senior Regional Advisor on Adolescent Health, Development and Participation of UNICEF. Izabela Milewska, and Pranvera Kastrati, and Michal Dzoga, with Global Partnership Initiatives.

It provides us a great set of speakers who will provide the global perspectives but also this is what we will be doing at the regional level with the impact generated at the national level.

And not to prolong, I have a great pleasure to turn over the floor to Susan Teltscher who will provide us an overview of our work which is happening at the global level.

Susan, the floor is yours.

>> SUSAN TELTSCHER: Thank you. Thank you very much, Jaroslaw, and good morning, everyone.

It's my great pleasure to be part of this important event, and to start off the first session which will focus on digital skills development in Europe.

So what I would like to do at the beginning of this session, I would like to put the topic in the broader context, in particular in the light of the past year and the pandemic and then also share with you how we in ITU try to address the challenge through our different activities.

Next slide, please.

So let's look at COVID-19 first. So if there's one aspect that clearly came out during the pandemic, it's the importance of good Internet connectivity, and the fact that many people don't have it, and were put at a disadvantage.

So, first, according to UNESCO, about 90% of schools

were closed at some point during the pandemic, with about
1.6 billion students out of school. And those that had
remote learning capabilities that had a huge advantage over
those who didn't have that. Also ITU and UNESCO estimate
that two-thirds of the children do not have access at home.
Second according to ILO around 93% of the global workforce
were affected by workplace closures.

So, again, those who had the privilege to do jobs that
can be done remotely, or those who had the connectivity and
the capacity to do that were greatly favored.

In Europe, around -- it's estimated that around 40% of
the workforce teleworked at some point during the pandemic.

So the future, we expect that some of the new ways of
working and learning are enabled by the use of technologies
will continue, but that requires reliable and affordable
and a digital skilled population. But according to ITU,
there's still 46% of the world population that is offline,
even where broadband connectivity is available.

Next slide, please.

COVID brought about the digital skills gap. In ITU,
and others found that the lack of digital skills is one the
main barriers to Internet usage and that in developing
countries around 65% of people lack the skills to use the
Internet. But according -- at the same time, to ILO,
during the pandemic, employment in ICT-related industries
experienced the highest growth, but there is a huge skills
gap globally, but also in Europe. For example, if we look
at Europe -- and I think these numbers are more about the
EU. Jaroslaw provided some other information on southeast
Europe countries, but in the EU, it's estimated that almost
40% of the population lacks basic digital skills. That
around 90% of future jobs will require digital skills, that
there is a huge shortage of IT specialists in the labor
market and only 1 in 6 ICT specialists are female.

So it's a global problem. It's a problem also in
Europe and it's addressed among other approaches through
the European digital -- the European skills agenda and the
digital education plan. Next slide, please.

If we look at the digital skills and the digital
skills gap, at the global level, there's a gap at all
levels of digital skills and you can see here how we have
in our digital skills toolkit, we have distinguished the
different skill levels into basic, advanced, intermediate
and advanced. So at the basic level, these are really
needed to bring people online, but there's also huge gaps

of digital skilled workers in almost all countries across
the world, and these require more intermediate and advanced
skills, job ready skills, skills for ICT professions. And
with so many people affected by unemployment following the
crisis, or the pandemic, the need for digital skills
training will become even more important, because this is
where many jobs might be found in the future.

Next slide, please.

So let's look a bit at ITU and some of the solutions
that we offer in our work. Our main objective is to
develop capacities and skills for the digital economy. We
work globally and we have a big focus on developing
countries and we are looking at three approaches to this
challenge. One is through training, developing and
delivering training courses, delivering capacity
development workshops. This is, for example, through our
ITU academic platform, our centers of excellence network
and the other stream is to focus on research, develop and
disseminate research, policy guidelines on digital
capacity, and on skills development, and we are very active
and engaging in strategic partnerships to do that because
we realize that the scaling will come through these
strategic partnerships.

Next slide, please.

Here is a little snapshot of our main products and
services related to digital skills.

I mentioned already the ITU academy platform. I
invite you all, if you don't know it yet, to take a look
and see what kind of courses are offered there. This is
mostly for the ICT professionals and we work a lot through
the centers of excellence programs to deliver the trainings
over the ITU Academy platforms. But I wanted to mention
the Digital Transformation Centers, and here we work with
countries and local centers in countries who deliver'
community level more basic and intermediate level, digital
skills training and we try to scale that by creating a
network of digital transformation centers globally.

And then we have different knowledge resources, and
products on digital skills, such as the digital skills
assessment guidebook that will be presented this afternoon,
and which is also basis for the work carried out here.

Next slide. So before closing, let me highlight one
of our recent partnerships that we are developing with
UNDP, and I'm also very happy to see that Agi Veres is also
on this panel here. So this focuses on the implementation

of one of the key eight areas that came out of the UN
Secretary General's roadmap for digital cooperation. This
focus area is on digital capacity building and we are
working very closely with UNDP and other stakeholders on a
number of concrete deliverables and outputs which we hope
to launch this year. They are highlighted here on the
slide. We are currently doing a global mapping of all
digital capacity initiatives that are being offered by
different providers.

So we are also working towards launching a
multi-stakeholder network on digital capacity building. It
will be launched later this year. Linked to that, we are
working on a joint facility on capacity. That it to match
the demand and the supply for digital capacity building,
including many digital skills initiatives.

And finally -- and this is particular through the UNDP
network in the countries, the focus of this work is also on
strengthening capacity development at the country level.

So with this, I would like to close my short
introduction and hand back to Jaroslaw.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Susan. And
you paved the way for our next speaker already, talking
about our partnership with the UNDP and it's my great
pleasure to welcome deputy director of the regional office
of UNDP for Europe and central Asia, Agi Veres. So Agi,
the floor is yours.

>> AGI VERES: Thank you very much, Jaroslaw.

>> AGI VERES: I think it's very important to have
these basic capacity mappings and the data out there so
that when we are responding to the needs and the demand of
the region, we can really rely on this kind of assessment.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the -- the --
actually very much tied to your presentation are digital
development, skill development and also what works and what
we see as the challenges in the region and what we can do.
So if you can please go to the next slide.

So essentially, I mean one of the things that we are
seeing is if you look at the sustainable development goals,
digital is everywhere! So essentially we are talking about
a theme that's almost like a precondition for achieving a
lot of the SDGs, and there is a quote from the UNDP report,
and it's about empowering people to take part, and
empowering the economies, the governance and so forth.

If you can go to the next slide, please.

So what we have -- what we have experienced during the

COVID-19 response. I mean, this was obviously the -- we all know it was an unprecedented year and unprecedented challenge, but at the same time, we have seen unprecedented opportunities emerging from this. I mean, Susan, you have covered some of the -- the data and some of the findings about schooling and online working.

But essentially, I think what we also need to mention is that somehow COVID, when it comes to digital, it leapfrogged at least this region, but globally, it leap frogged something that we were planning to support and see in five years it happened in one year out of necessity. So that means that if you need to invest in digital skills and infrastructure, you know, there's a longer time period for that, but out of necessity, it is possible to speed up. So if it's possible to do it out of necessity, how can we build on essentially scale and the standard scope of it.

What we have also seen, that there is a really big digital divide that has been exposed. When I talk about leapfrogging the digital response, there's really various degrees of it. Some countries have essentially achieved in one year what they were planning to do maybe in a decade and other countries were struggling to keep up the basics.

So what this means is that the digital transformation is very necessary and very helpful but can also make inequality worse, if not intentionally inclusive.

And you alluded in your presentation as well from ITU's perspective on the effect on children, developing countries, the most vulnerable and especially women that sticks out as well.

Then we also have risk of digitalization and we have paid a lot of attention on the side effects of this, which is about misinformation, and really kind of spreading as we all know the false news and potentially in certain areas also contributing to extreme violence, extremism and adverse effects of conflict.

And lastly, what was clear is governments that already invested in digital, they responded more effectively. And so the early implementers have been able to gear up their government response, and the online economy.

We can go to the next one, please.

Next slide, please.

In terms the digital skills and access. The majority of countries have enacted the working and studying remotely, requiring a fast adaptation of the digital tools. There's a large number who rapidly digitalize the working

process and have the workforce work remotely.

And at the same time, it's been exacerbated due to the pandemic, automation, women participation, these are all areas that have suffered.

If you can go to the next slide, please. One the things we are particularly worried about is women and digital skills. This has come back in most of assessments, that 140 million predominantly female jobs have a 70% or higher probability of automation. Which require new skills in work and working arrangements especially targeting women.

When we compare it with the digital skills level of women, this is the opposite picture. So while it seems that women would need these skills the most, they are the least capacitated at least in our region on digital skills. This is why we have paid a lot of attention and women and staff, trying to see how we can integrate in various parts of the capacity. I think women through the row indicational training and other measures as well. If we can go to the next one, please. So there's a lot of examples and needs out there. And in the short term, what we have been trying to do is really to support a skills development that better matches the market.

One thing that I would like to emphasize that came from Jaroslaw and Susan before me. The private sector is suffering because of the capacity available to them. On the one hand, they require the technical capacities but on the other hand, having the digital skills to go with them is absolutely essential. So in that sense, there's a big gap to fill so that we can match the technical capacities of the people for private sector jobs but also in teaching and academia and governance but it has to be matched with the digital skills. Otherwise they cannot be effective, and it's much lower in the private sector especially.

Just two examples in Armenia and Serbia where we have been working and retraining programs to create job opportunities, especially focusing on women. Next.

We are looking at some other opportunities in Kazakhstan. We started the telecommuting arrangements. And focused on users of public service so that the E-governance efforts are going hand in hand with digital literacy of citizens, and they can take advantage of the online services.

In Turkey, it's a very good example when we are saying it's the most vulnerable that suffer from the digital skill

gaps. When we look at refugees they need to be integrated
into the society and Turkey is hosting a large number of
refugees and we intend to implement them into the education
system and the municipalities where they live and this
requires additional attention to these particular
vulnerable groups.

Next.

Now if you look at the medium term. I think on the
short term, it's about catching up on skill sets and
capacity building and putting things online in addition to
the whole infrastructure gap, but if you are looking at the
medium term, what we need to look at is really the
ecosystem support.

So it's through a diversity of platform that we are
supporting a diverse actors to enhance digital capabilities
and challenge the existing norms and value systems.

So if you look at the pictogram, it's about the
communities, the institutions, the governments and the
environment that we need to pull it together, so that we
create a platform that uses the knowledge and the advocacy
to advance the inclusiveness, including all the digital
skill building.

So these are really need to go through a coordinated
and diverse set of networks that can help to build more
inclusive and innovative and productive businesses in key
STEM sectors. Next.

Just an example of a facility in terms of what -- how
we are approaching this issue, that we are working with
other partners as well to bring together the financing,
skill set, the governance and the private sector. So we
are just trying to experiment with.

Next.

I don't want to spend a lot on this slide. I think
the key principles have come through very clearly before.
It's about inclusion, equity, innovation and the
partnerships.

Next.

So in terms of concluding, it I think you posed a
question before, what are the key policy measures or key
principles that are most important in terms of this digital
skills -- filling the digital skills gap. I think what we
have seen in this region and the interventions happening in
the countries, I really would say that if we have one area
to address, it's about women and digital skills that.
Connects so many issues in terms the job market, gender

equality and women's participation both in terms of the
economic and political sphere and overall affecting women.
I think if we can help 50% of the population, we have a big
step forward this requires all the governments putting the
right measures in place.

But if I have to pinpoint on one issue, I would say
it's women in STEM. Thank you very much.

Thank you very much.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for this
excellent presentation and overview of the approach and
also the prioritization. This is very important in
particular in the work on the on this subject. But let us
turn to our colleagues to UNICEF and Nina Ferencic, who
representing the UNICEF, and we are looking forward to hear
more on the focus on the youth, I would assume, but let's
hear.

>> NINA FERENCIC: Thank you very much, Jaroslaw. I'm
Nina Ferencic, with the UNICEF office for Europe and
central Asia.

For us, the key focus is on children and adolescents
and I will perhaps paint the picture in a way. Everybody
knows that young people today are the so-called connected
generation. Connectivity is so important, even before
COVID, we knew the worst punishment for a kid is to take
their phone away, right?

So I think one of the best abbreviations I have heard
is that this is the generation of APATAD, which is any
place, any time, any device.

So clearly there's a lot of focus on young people on
technology, on being connected and we see overall, even
though the whole world's population is connected but when
it comes to young people, they are always even more
connected than the rest of the population. So it's a
generational issue for many of the young people of today.

Next. However, what is important to know is that he
is time, that doesn't necessarily mean that young people
automatically have the digital skills just because they are
young. We conducted a number of assessments and actually
polls, opinion polls with young people about various
aspects of learning and living during COVID. You could see
that some of the challenges as the world went viral,
online, some of the things they found was the lack of
teacher training capacity. I mean, a lot of things that
they are talks about which actually enter too the year.

It's not automatic for young people to have the skills

to follow, to follow education, to follow online learning to move to online jobs, et cetera. It requires an investment. So next slide, please. One the things we are do as UNICEF, we are trying to work a lot more on equipping learners, students, with the necessary digital competence and digital skills. These some are examples.

We are working with teachers because this is a key issue that we saw in many countries there were stories which are quite moving in a way, that the power relations within the classroom all of a sudden changed as kids were teaching -- were -- as young people and children were pretty much telling their teachers how to organize the WhatsApp groups or deliver content online and so on. It was very heartwarming stories there.

And, of course, equipment parents. That's another thing where we see huge gaps, because we know that children who have the parental supports, they do better. This is part of the equity gap that some of the previous speakers have been talking about. These are some the issues that we have been working on, learners, teachers, parents, through a number of initiatives across the region.

Next -- but what I also want to talk about is the fact that a lot of the skills building actually happens out of school settings -- in out-of-school settings. We have one program, which is called the Up Shift program and it's a program that actually teaches young people to -- to become socially aware entrepreneurs, if you want, to try and problem solve in their communities. This is a program that has been introduced in about 16 countries in our region. It started in our region that's now global with more than 36 countries introducing this Upshift models. And through modules and boot camps, you teach young people to problem solve, critical thinking skills and teamwork, network to solve problems in their communities.

But what is interesting with COVID, that Upshift program, they had to go digital as well.

You can actually transfer a program like that on to the digital setting, on to the online setting without necessarily losing quality. It's different, of course, but it has the capacity to reach a lot more people and a lot more young students than was the case before, when these activities were in person.

In a sense, it's an interesting compromise. We will lose some of the enthusiasm of being mentored by someone who is next to you, but we gain a lot in terms of skills

and reaching a lot more young people with these programs. So there's important opportunities to build skills and the moving of this upshift program to the digital environment requires a lot of adaptation and digital skills for young people.

So just as a summary, what we have been seeing, in developing digital competence as are colleagues have said, the digital divide and the imbalance and the focus on digital competency that's Jaroslaw, and social norms and gender stereotypes and also even when children and young people possess digital skills as they mentioned they are not digitally competent. There's a lot more investment and fine tuning that is needed in terms of going to the more intermediate or advanced digital skills. A lot of them have just of the basics.

Schools so far have been doing negligible contributions to skills building. It requires a lot more investment in that, a lot more combined strategies, combining curricular reforms and digital skills in there.

Parents and teachers are a key support system for young people and if they are behind their students and their children won't be able to progress either. Sometimes teaching parents from early on is a way also to make sure that they take care of things like safety of their kids online and so on. We need to scale up the out-of-school initiatives through innovation labs and hackathons and volunteering and working in places where there's a need for digital skills as a way of creating that capacity among young people.

What we see as priority, leave no one offline. Also preparing young people as leaders in digital transition because it is something where they can, and they want to say the lead. Integrating the development of young people, and parents and teachers within the educational digitalization. This is the place that reaches the children and the parents and it's an important place to invest. At the same time, we still need to make sure and do a lot more on guarding children on the digital learning and online space.

Another thing that we need to address head on. Whether we like it or not, there's some elements in -- among political authorities that still perceives Internet access as something that -- especially as children and adolescents that need to be scroll. So sometimes the access to the Internet is severely curtailed. So there's

lack of access to even essential information for young people is something that needs to be addressed as we work on these policies and the environmental systems.

So next slide, please.

I think as we move forward, what we will be doing together with colleagues in this call, is supporting the digital transition and work on the youth engagement, especially girls and marginalized young people. I think the ITU's Generation Connect is an excellent, excellent example of how engaging with young people is a two-way street. On the one hand, we equip children and adolescents with the digital skills they need but they can be key partners in making sure that those skills are moved and connected to others.

So the Generation Connect of ITU has given an excellent set of guidance of what they think is important, because they are in the IT field and they know the expertise, the solutions and the online -- the -- the young people can teach us about how to deal with fake news. We have seen in the COVID epidemic, how to deal with online violence, et cetera.

So err this the ones who can come up with the solutions, and they are the ones who if we engage them better, we can get a lot more done.

But they can also help upskill -- upskill from more rural and disadvantaged communities. We have excellent programs where the Turkish kids are teaching those from disadvantaged backgrounds on how to access the Internet and building their skills. They can be important partners as we move in this process of -- of building skills.

We also need a better understanding and data on the skills mismatch between what is needed for jobs hasn't what we equip young people with. Sound programs and policies on digitalization. There's a whole issue of certifying digital skills. They build their skills and they don't have the recognition for basic employment.

And then co-creation, human-centered design and using some of these as we develop policies and implement programs.

Two other things that I would like to mention quickly is that we are also as UNICEF working on initiative on e-health, especially emental health for young people. This is something that we saw as one of the top priorities, is to deal with their mental health. We are working on making sure that services are available a lot more broadly online

to youth.

Including online counseling and using peers and we are developing some approaches with that and we work with you on that, but also we are continuing to work on the issue of cybersecurity, protection of kids online and protection against sexual exploitation and all of those things where we are seeing that the lack of digital skills, like police forces, like national prosecutors, judges, et cetera, is one of the key obstacles for addressing this sexual violence against children and ensuring kids are protected and safeguarded when online.

So next slide. Thank you very much for your attention. Happy to discuss further as we move on. Thank you.

Bye.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Nina, for this comprehensive overview of this, what UNICEF is doing and what are the top priorities to go with the -- with advancing the digital skills in our region.

And now let me turn to Izabela Milewska who is representing DIGITAL EUROPE. So let me turn to those who are also leading, in fact, a huge program of the European Union on in this area. We are very much interested in learning about EU and non-EU countries.

>> IZABELA MILEWSKA: I hope you see me and hear me well. I'm in a promote location these days. It's a real pleasure and honored to be in this group of such distinguished speakers. I really listened to the previous presentations with much attention and I have to admit I have learned a lot. So thank you for sharing those interesting insights.

DIGITAL EUROPE, we are actually an association of more than 35,000 organizations and companies around Europe that are interested in the digital sector. So we work and focus mostly on the developments within the European Union but our members also recruit from outside of the EU, like Belarus or UK for that matter.

So I have the pleasure to lead the efforts around the digital skills within the Working Group that recruits its members from companies and national IT associations that are really interested in that.

With these couple of minutes, I wanted to give you an overview of how tree in Europe and within the European Union perceives the priory is in the context of digital skills and how we reflect in the context of the European

Union's strategies and skills that are being implemented.

If I can ask for the next slide. So in order to start thinking about where the emphasis should be put on, I would like to use the digital skills pyramid that was developed by one of the directors in the European Commission and it starts with digital literacy and goes through digital user skills and practitioner skills and finally concluding with digital or eleaders.

What I would like to think or reflect on is that there's a difference between those who are digital users and those are that digital creators digital innovators, those that we want to have within the society add many as possible. And to do that, we should, of course, start and build from digital literacy but never stop at that level.

If we think about our youngest generations that are digital native are always connected as Nina has elaborated just a few minutes ago. What -- we are looking from the industry perspective, is that that digital native generation is absolutely, digitally literally. But the problem starts when they want -- they want to sort of convert those skills and convert them into digital practitioner skills. And with that, whatever happens with the latest technology, with all the latest technology trends such as cloud computing, machine learning, big data, cybersecurity. All that happens well above digital literacy or digital user skills level.

And so if we think about building strategies or implementing programs that would really be comprehensive, we need to look at every step of the way in this sort of digital skills pyramid and we should drive to create, to produce, as much talent as possible that will be really ready to create and to innovate in this digital industry.

Next slide, please.

Can you actually hear me? The slide before. Yes, that one, thanks.

So a couple of considerations, when we think about building strategies around digital skills, from a perspective of industry actors, first of all, we certainly need to focus on securing the right level of digital skills within the future workforce. So those that are students in the primary, the secondary and also higher education. That said, though, we cannot forget, and we cannot stop thinking about what happens with the current workforce. What kind of reskilling and upskilling, people that are already -- that graduated from any formal education institution need

to convey in order to be ready for the jobs of tomorrow.

When it comes to the future workforce, the broadband is key and the availability of the right devices for learning as well as developing new hybrid learning models that are ready for in-person delivery, as well as remote learning but that should not be disconnected from making sure that the teachers are ready for the technology revolution. It was already mentioned that actually teachers' readiness is absolutely key and, you know, the youngest generation are actually struggling to follow online classes not just because of some issues with the technology, but also because the fact that the teachers are not always ready to deliver on the quality class remotely. And then computational thinking and it is in line with the fact that we really want to develop and produce as many digital creators as much as possible. Digital skills should not be a pure technical knowledge, technical skills but a combination of both technical and analytical and problem-solving skills, including that focus on lifelong learning and readiness to learn without the entire professional career and professional life.

You cannot stop when you graduate from a school or university. You have to continue. And that leads me to the -- to the considerations around the current workforce. So I mentioned reskilling and upskilling is absolutely critical. We need to be mindful of what are we reskilling or upskilling for.

So what are the jobs available in a local market on the global market as well? Today when you -- when you can deliver on your work remotely, your employer can be on the other end of the world, as long as you know what and how to deliver and so this sort of thinking building locally but growing globally. They include local employers that will help to define what is needed is absolutely critical and combined with that focus on advanced digital skills, as well as making sure that whatever the training program you build, there is a path to employment for that individual after finishing the training. It's absolutely key.

And with that, a very important aspect of it is skills validation, defined as industry-led certification, and microcredentials.

Today employers will not want to wait four years to produce new talent coming out of the university. They need that talent today. So that they can innovate faster. And the short courses or the medium courses and programs are

super critical. One last thing, we should not get about supporting the small and medium businesses. Large enterprises will be able to reskill or upskill their employees faster or slower, but they will be able to make that happen.

Small and medium businesses will always lag behind, unless the government will not step in and form a real partnership with the industry and the providers so that the skills that are needed for the employers or the small and medium businesses are there on the local market.

And with that, I will turn with my last slide. He want to conclude what at DIGITAL EUROPE have we developed in order to support you when thinking about the strategy and how to build key performance indicators and what are the best practices and also some operational recommendations and what it takes to make those projects successful.

We build those documents and the strategies really thinking and considering a great sort of vision that is out there by the European Commission with digital, and the digital decade vision and pact for skills and all of these are very much needed and the industry hugely supports that.

And so as DIGITAL EUROPE, we built an investigation 2025, where we covered a number of sort of areas that are important. That includes digital skills next to, of course, infrastructure, digital healthcare, digital manufacturing and so on. Key performance indicators that are super key to think about how the second success is looking. It's the number of people trained and the number of people certified and the number of people that got a new but also how is the presence of women reflected in the ICT job market.

The European Union has put a lot of effort to introduce the recovery funds in the context of COVID, but also the longstanding investment with the structural funds particularly the European Social Fund and so on.

We all learn in this journey and there's a lot of learnings, best practices and case studies that we can get out of it. And we have bill quite detailed recommendations as to what to spend this money for, how to implement -- how to implement it, what are the principles within those investments that should be put in place in order to make sure that we invest in the right way, and we take the appropriate outcome and the conclusion from -- from that investment overall.

So I have included direct links to those documents, obviously, it's a lot -- much more to cover and to go through than we have time today. So I encourage you to just click on them and go through each one of them.

If there's any question or anything that I could elaborate on, we can continue during the discussion or also offline.

With that thank you very much for the attention and for having me here today. There's the contact to me if you need to. Happy to continue the discussion with you all today.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Izabela, and thank you very much for bringing the private sector perspective. We are valuing this very much and we are looking in order to continue collaboration and strengthen collaboration with digital Europe as the platform, associating so many private sector stakeholders active in Europe and implementing a lot of the European level.

So thank you very much and I encourage all participate apes to put -- participants to put the questions in the chatroom and in the meantime, I want to just before we are going to our next speaker, to say that we would aim at concluding this session in 20 minutes to have enough space for the next presentations and maybe hopefully at least a short discussion.

So having said that, I have the great pleasure to also welcome on board today our strategic partner, a representative of the RCC, which is focusing on the Western Balkans, where digital skills have been identified as the top priority for this part of Europe. And let me turn to Pranvera Kastrati for her presentation and we can better understand where the things are moving in this part of Europe. So Pranvera, the floor is yours.

>> PRANVERA KASTRATI: Thank you. Thank you very much, Jaroslaw, and thank you to all the presenters for very interesting presentations. I would like to keep my presentation short so we have time for discussions, but I want to start with saying that in the Western Balkans, the whole Digital Agenda and digital skills is seen as a shared contribution, towards the development of the digital skills.

Can I have the next slide, please?

And also just to kind of give some additional flavor of where the region is and how the COVID -- the new realities induced by COVID impacted our region. The

industry prepared a study in December of 2020 and it showed indeed, that there is an increase of the use of digital content by the Western Balkans citizens in general.

And it is very -- very noticeable that the greatest increase is in education in social networks and the information sharing, while the Western Balkans citizens, it should be kind of worrisome, they are using -- they are using the Internet less and less to communicate with the public administration or to shop online. Which already shows the necessity to focus on this aspect.

I mean, not surprisingly, but the increase for digital education and the use of digital content and services of the digital platform have dramatically increase and 44 to 45% of the citizens of the Western Balkans were satisfied and they will continue to use the digital, but they are keen to go back to some traditional education which would lead to a -- additional needs in the area of digital skills.

Next please.

So where we stand in terms of digital skills in the Western Balkans. This is some data that we have used in a diagnostic property, prepared in December of 2020 and you can see that the level of digital skills across the Western Balkans vary a lot.

Yes, also we see that there is a lack of data and not all economies provide data for digital skills that are comparable among them, however this is something that you can see also in Europe and although we see an increase in the individuals having basic digital skills in the Western Balkans, still we are below the average of the EU Member States in this. And give than EU Member States are the mirror where we see towards the benchmark that we want to go. This is something that we really work a lot and you can also see that this shared responsibility I mentioned between government, private sector, education and also providers the trainings across the world if you want to call it and the Western Balkans. We have measured this through the Balkan barometer. And it's the third year that digital skills is very important for our businesses and for 80% of the managers, they claim that the need for digital skills this their businesses is very important, while it is a necessary and one of the two topical areas where most employers would require their employees to advance, so upskilling their knowledge is basically in digital skills.

Next, please.

Without burdening further with many figures, I wanted to flag where and what is the way forward for the Western Balkans and what we are do as a region. You all may have heard that during the Sophia Summit, we adopted the common regional market action plan, through which the Western Balkan economies agreed to have a coordinated regional response to the digital skills and this is why we have already networked and already established a Working Group that addresses the working skills from the demand and the supply side. And it's important to flag that this group does not encompass only the Western Balkans but also members from the international organizations having a specialized expertise in the field that can support the region, while we are through this common regional -- the common regional market action plan, the leaders have also put emphasis between the national needs and the regional feeds. The Western Balkan economies vary not only in their state of development but the EU integration progress.

This drives there are needs and at the same time being a small region and also small markets they tend to cluster and they tend to all together see how to make supply chains more remotely movable or interchangeable across the economies and for this they are all very much dedicated for tailor made action plans and this is through dedicated training programs, coaching, mentoring and also with leaders that would like to push forward the agenda in digital skills development. Next, please. And what we are doing in RCC, very shortly, what we are frying and what we are doing in RCC, as already mentioned, we have already established the permanent regional dialogue and digital skills and the Western Balkan institutions and expose them to the work of other international organizations working in the digital skills and I'm glad to say that some of you are already members with this Working Group and consulting in the Western Balkans and we have defined the agenda until 2024.

In this particular element of the digital skills development, we in RCC have engaged together with the Western Balkans in a scoping exercise where we are pre-assessing the needs or the priority sectors and the priority target groups for which a full class assessment of gaps and needs is required.

We are in the final phase of fine tuning the report and we will have soon the report shared with the Western Balkan economies to validate the priority sectors but we

are glad to say that for instance the public administration is one of the target groups that is mentioned by all economies. And given that they are the ones who develop the digital skills strategy, the digital skills policies. We believe that having a focused and tailor-made support is important for them while three priority sectors have been identified and I'm glad that this might also help to some additional clustering or support in supply chains that the whole region is -- is increasingly seeking for support.

We hope that through the peering and the networking in a structured manner, the region will be able to respond to the needs and addressing supply and demand, I also wanted to share with you that very recently, there was a self-assessment of the needs in the education sector across the Western Balkans region and it surprisingly, although all teachers are saying that the need for digital skills is there, it is not a very, let's say very prominently coming from them the skills that they are required to have and what they would like to be further trained in the years to come. That the last is showcasing the experiences the region. We have heard a lot today but I think having the region also leading the experience sharing. It is important. It shows that they deliver but they can learn from each other. So with this, I would like to conclude by saying that we have done a lot, but the shared contribution among all international organizations and regional organizations working in the feel is very much required.

Thank you very much for the attention and I'm glad to any further discussion.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. It's always great to hear about the advancement. Great work that we are doing in terms the digital integration and also putting the digital on the top of the agenda so all Western Balkan Countries. So congratulations to this progress and we are looking in order to the next steps in the region.

And ladies and gentlemen, now let me turn to our next speaker, Michal Dzoga, representing the Intel, so the voice of the private sector. Let's see how digital skills are supported by such a large company such as Intel. Michal, the floor is yours.

>> MICHAL DZOGA: Okay. Now I'm unmuting myself. Thank you, Jaroslaw.

Yes, being the last one in the line, it helps me reflect on what others have said and there was a lot really interesting topics, topics covered.

As we already said, you know, taking advantage. I would like to take us into the near future and the not repeat myself of teaching the digital skills. Intel has been very active in this space for quite some time. So approximately 20 years we had a program called Intel Teach and we worked with teachers and acknowledged the need for equipping them with necessary skilled to then pass it on further to kids.

Program was concluded with a big success, you know, and over 50 million teachers trained worldwide. Those actually right now having in mind that all of these great initiatives that we talked about are actually in place, I would actually like to focus today on one thing that is taking my mind and many people at Intel. A little bit looking into the future.

So I'm not going to use any slides because I'm making final remarks anyway. So just, you know, I would like to do a little bit upwards. You touched upon this. To be honest, I don't think it's quite good to put all the advanced skills in the same packet, right? So this if you talk about cloud computing and AI, it's hard to compare them. As much as, of course, we do acknowledge the increasing need for specialists in this area, I think one of the technologies really stands out and I'm talking about artificial intelligence.

Not only being able to program respective algorithms, but also to understand the technology, in our mind is actually -- it will be the prerequisite, especially for young people today, having what was said. It will be critical for them to succeed in the future economy. And why I tell you I'm taking to the near future, it's not really science fiction anymore. It's here and now.

So companies that will not adopt, you know, artificial intelligence will be perform more expensive, less accurate services that will take actually more time to deliver. So the question is who would like to pay for this. Looking at adoption of AI and the adoption of many digital skills, we will say, yeah, why not to turn to the theory, you should not be worried because the jobs that will disappear or that will get a certain level of automation, well, then, new jobs will be created.

But I think what was true 60 years ago when this theory was created, might quite not be applicable today.

Actually for three specific reasons. First of all, I think with regard to A I., we are talking about precedented

scale of changes. We are not talking any more of simple
jobs. We are talking doctors. We are talking lawyers.
All sorts of jobs that so far haven't been impacted that
much by -- by coming new technology trends. We are talk
about unprecedented pace of change and that's what I just
told you about, this competitive advantage which is here
and now.

     But not least, mobility. I think that's one of the
main reasons why most of the governments that we work with
since 2018, when Canada was first one to introduce an AI
development policy. They are actually becoming to realize
that the jobs that will disappear in one place, especially
when we talk about new technology space may not reappear in
the same place.

     Even the jobs that were so far tied to a place. So,
like, for example, you know, drivers or community workers.
So with that, you know, we at Intel believe that really,
you know, giving the young people abilities to -- and
building on top of all of this basic and the most important
digital skills you talked about, giving them this ability
to make the next step. That's what one of you already
said. Don't stop at the basic digital skills. I think it
was Izabela who said this.

     So referring to this, we, of course, decided to take
some action. So our CEO announced the rise 2030 strategy.
Actually, Intel made a big pledge to change 30 million
young people around the world from the digital skills
focusing on AI.

     You would like to take what we called an AI-readiness
of young people, of future workers but also for current
workforce, and equip them with all the understanding of the
new technology and being able to create their own
solutions.

     And, of course, this will not happen without go basic
digital skills, acquisition and there's a huge need for
that as well.

     So coming back a little bit to -- concluding to the
European space, the program is being implemented in many
regions around the world. In our region, we go from the
east, where the program is active in Russia and Germany and
the UK, France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. We see a great
readiness of governments to work towards, you know,
building the skills into the education system, and, of
course, taking into account that we are far from taking
this to the mandatory or the basic education level. It

will still be an extracurricular activity. We see a
tremendous interest from the kids, and also referring to
you, Agi, a tremendous interest on the female side. So
there is pretty much 50/50 girls and boys who are
interested in this technology, of course, they might come a
little bit with different solutions. So girls tend to
more, you know, save the world with AI and boys maybe tend
to fly to the moon. I don't want to be biased here, but,
you know, judging from different ideas that come around, of
course, boys and girls have specific, though. The
technology seems to be very much of an interest to both
boys and girls, women and men.

So with, that you know, thank very much for the time,
that has been given and I hope I gave you a little built of
our perspective.

Sorry for focusing on this particular skill, but I
hope we made the point why we think it's so important.
Thank you very much.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, Michal for
this input.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are arriving to the end of
this session, however, I would not like to close this
session without asking one question to all of our
distinguished speakers. This is happening on the margin of
the regional forum of the United Nations, where we are
discussing the advancements of SDGs and the ICTs are in the
center of the discussions.

If you have the power of advising and making one
policy recommendation for this over 1,300 policymakers
joining the forces together from Europe and central Asia on
the digital skills, what would be this policy
recommendation and if you would, able to say a few words
what from your perspective is key in order to strengthen
the partnership building in our region.

So I would fart from our colleagues from the ITU and
then go -- and follow the order of all speakers. Susan,
I'm turning over to you. And please be concise taking into
account that we are running out of time.

>> SUSAN TELTSCHER: Yeah, sure. Thank you. Thank you
very much, Jaroslaw. I will be taking a bit more the
global perspective if you don't mind. And I want to
congratulate everyone for interesting presentations and
points that were made. I very much enjoyed all the other
interventions.

So I think coming to your question, assuming that the

digital skills policy, as much is already on -- the priority on the agenda. I'm not saying they should put that as a priority on the agenda, but I would say -- and this refers a bit also to our work, because that's why we focus on that. It is really, really important before you plan your policies to do the national assessment, and to take stock of what are the skills level in your country. Who has what skills exactly, who is providing what training, and skills. What is the need from the industry and by whom, and all of that needs to be linked very clearly to the national development vats, because we heard a lot about job ready skills, but we need to be very targeted if you want to be effective and have a good impact.

So for me, it's really important to do this exercise before you move on and formulate your very detailed strategies later on and then the other question, I saw that in the chat, how can we pull to go and how can we combine and scale up by partnering, I would like to come back to what I mentioned in my presentation, the multi stakeholder network that we are developing with UNDP and other organizations in terms of bringing together precisely all the different initiatives and stakeholders who do work in this field on digital capacity development and if any of you are interested in knowing more about that, I know that we are already collaborating with many agencies and other stakeholders on this.

Then please let me know and we will add you to this network that is being developed and we can include all the initiatives being provided by different stakeholders in the global database that are being developed right now, under this framework the SDGs roadmap on digital cooperation.

Thank you very much Jaroslaw.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, and now I will move to Agi.

>> AGI VERES: It was interesting to listen to the speakers.

So you asked for policy recommendations and partnerships. As we were talking and also from our work, I will propose one thing that's covering both, which is I think we need public private partnership policies that are promoting digital skills development. We need the private sector's demand to do this, the demand -- it's the capacity -- it's the knowledge to know what is needed and what is the demand and actually there's a lot more capacity

there for training and overall coaching, not simple schooling and training that could work with the public sector that would you put in place policies for promoting the most vulnerable to close the digital divide. And so to address the skill gaps that would be beneficial. Thank you very much.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Great. Thank you very much for this. And now let me turn to Nina.

>> NINA FERENCIC: Thank you, Jaroslaw. Thank you for an excellent session. I would say for UNICEF, the main message is involve adolescents and young people in all areas of planning and policy development. They have the ideas. They have the knowledge they can be great partners if they are allowed to cocreate and colead in the process. Thank you.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. And let me turn now to Izabela.

>> IZABELA MILEWSKA: Thank you, everybody. I this I will echo what Agi mentioned around public/private partnership and highlighting the most -- the point around shared responsibility. So no single actor will be able to solve all the issues around digital skills gap at any level.

So I think we just need to be ready, transparent and open to the collaboration with one another.

And the second thing that I wanted to highlight is path to employment. So no education, no training, will be ever successful if there's no clear pathway to employment at the end of the process. And that will be my major call to action to everybody that is involved in designing the strategies.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much. Let's turn to our leagues to RCC, Pranvera Vera.

>> PRANVERA KASTRATI: Thank you. I will again echo what I said chaired responsibility and contribution in developing digital skills is crucial. It's a nonending process. It requires a permanent attention to what the skills, the gap in the markets are. And if we do not mention the supply and the demand side for digital skills, I don't think that we will be that successful. So I will close this by this.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much, and the final word goes to our colleague from private sector, Michal.

>> MICHAL DZOGA: Thank you very much for these two points. Two quick suggestions or recommendations from my

side so what we would like to see is really taking tear of
what is needed now but also really observing trends and
looking what will be needed in five, ten, 15 years from now
and then the second point is we would love to see, and if
your organization would play a certain level of
collaboration between the country and the policy level. I
think in many cases we don't have to re-invent the wheel.
So this will be from my side. Thank you.
        >> JAROSLAW PONDER: All right. Thank you very much.
It's really a pleasure to hear all the panelists are
agreeing on certain items and, in fact, we are creating
virtual space for the future collaboration between even
those who are on the panelist if they are not collaborating
already.
        Dear ladies and gentlemen, on all the participants
following us on the live stream but also here in the
meeting room, I would like to thank you very much for this
great panel. And we are looking forward to the future
cooperation in this regards. And now it's also my pleasure
to say that we will be closing this session going to a ten
minutes of break that we can refresh a bit, and we would
meet to go again at 11:50. You don't have to switch the
virtual room. You can stay connected, but we would start
the session in ten minutes.
        So one more time thank you very much, and see you
very, very soon. Thank you.
        [Break]
        >> ANAMARIA MESHKURTI: Welcome back, everyone. I hope
you had a very good break and you are ready for us to dive
into session two. This session is country approaches to
faster digital skills development. My name is AnaMaria
Meshkurti. I will be moderating, I'm representing the ITU
office for Europe.
        In this session, we will give the floor to country
representatives to present in-depth their national
approaches to foster digital skills development.
        I would like to invite the audience to submit their
questions in the chat, directed to our speakers and we will
definitely take those questions at the end. We hope that
time will allow for this. For this session, I have the
pleasure to welcome our distinguished panelists
Ms. Florence Haxhi, who is the director for development
programs in the Prime Minister's office in Albania.
Ms. Manana Ratiani, deputy director for the National Center
for Teacher Professional Development, Georgia. And

Ms. Liesbeth Ruoff van Welzen, of the KNVI of the Netherlands and Ms. Nevena Praizovic, and Gulsanna Mamediieva, who is from the Ukraine. Welcome all of you for sharing your country's experience and perspective. I would like to immediately invite, Ms. Florensa Haxhi, who will be representing Albania's perspective in this.

>> FLORENSA HAXHI: Thank you, AnaMaria, I'm happy to give the insights regarding Albania. I'm sharing my screen. So as we saw also from the first session, it is very important that we see, when we talk about digital skills, we see three perspective and they are, of course, interrelated, but when we are talking about digital skills, we have in mind digital skills in youth and students and preuniversity students. We have in mind also digital skills for the private sector and we have in mind digital skills for the government services, so eGovernment skills.

So regarding the three perspective, this is where I'm going to focus in today's presentation, and as I said, they are interrelated and the policy making should be somehow focused in these three perspectives. Regarding the unit that I represent, it is called the Development Programs unit and corporation. We are in the Prime Minister's office. We are responsible mainly for coordinating among different actors, especially for fields and areas that need a lot of coordination, where one ministry, let's say cannot do the coordination alone. So we assist with that. We also are responsible for drafting together with line ministries development programs, which are not strategies, but they are strategic documents which are more operational, where you have also pilot projects inside, et cetera.

So regarding digital skills in Albania, if we could place everything in one slide regarding the responsible institutions, we would say that there is a the Prime Minister's office, as I said, as has the coordination role mainly, and then it is the Ministry of Education and sports, mainly with the part that has to do with developing digital skills and young students and university students. And ministry of finance and economy, will vet the professional training programs. Ministry -- and also the private sector incentives. The National Agency for Information Society, it is responsible and it is leading the -- it has the leading role in developing the digital agenda in our country. And it's also the ministry of -- the ministry of infrastructure and energy that has the part

for policy making when it comes to digital telecommunication skills and then there are other agencies that have more executive role.

Regarding national strategic documents that somehow are linked with the digital skills development, even though we don't have a strategy until now is especially focused on digital skills and we should have one. But let's say that for the moment, digital skills development is scattered amongst some strategic documents.

One is the Digital Agenda, as I said, it's -- the new one is under drafting process. The other one is the national employment and skills strategy, and there are also components there this deals with digital skills development, mainly for the private sector. The national strategy for scientific research, technology and innovation. We would like to finalize the drafting process for this year and a big part of that strategy will be focused on digital skills development.

And national strategy for development integration, this is the umbrella strategy that we have in our country, that it's like an umbrella for all the strategies, sector and cross-sectoral strategies. And it's also under drafting process, a new up with, and national program on innovation and start-ups which is which my unit is responsible for drafting that program, together with the other institutions and in this program, we are focusing mainly on start-ups and building an ecosystem for the start-ups to flourish and the innovation for the SMEs and what the digital skills they need to have and match them with the start-ups so we can provide the digital skills that the start-ups and the SMEs that are more traditional and they need to foster these skills.

Regarding the Digital Agenda, as I said, we are under the process of drafting it and it is going well the process. The three main pillars are the ones we see here. So I just want to stop here for the development of eGovernment services that we're very focused and have been very focused on developing the eGovernment services during the past years and we will do so until we have, let's say all the services digitalized and we think especially now that has helped a lot not only the citizens but also the private sector and another pillar is the enabling and developing the basic and advanced digital skills as you see, in order to involve the population in ICT services and increase ICT professionals.

So here this will be a breakdown in a series of measures on how we are going to do that.

Regarding the demand for the digital skills, it's linked to the changes that the economy is undergoing especially with the COVID crisis and it's this desire of society to move closer digitalization and this was a desire not only now because of the COVID crisis, but we have seen that also before the COVID crisis. The COVID crisis just brought it more into focus.

Also the majority of society, owns these digital skills and using electronic products and products that are easy, social programs, social media, and most of the population, they know how to do easy online transactions.

They have knowledge and they have received an educational -- that they received in the education system, and they can use these skills for employment reasons.

No we have already as I said started to think -- when I say we, I mean the policymakers to think, how to develop policies that are pro innovation, pro youth, pro digitalization. If we divide this in soft measures and hard measures, the soft measures we have the legislative framework that would help the youth to flourish and to develop their skills and to be more competitive in the employment market.

We have developed and drafted a law on start-ups and there's public consultation of that law and as we speak, it is in the final stages of act proved.

And this law, we have given there, we have focused in all the incentives that the youth needs in order to open a new business, and how the government can help them. Also as I said, the draft of the start-ups and innovation program, it's another one that we are focusing on this is linked with reskilling and upskilling of SMEs and what incentives can the government give to them?

Regarding the hard measures -- when I say hard measures, I mean infrastructure. So it is, of course, known and it was also mentioned before that in order to have digital skills and people to develop digital skills, you need infrastructure. You cannot do that even if you have the best policies in place. So our infrastructure, when it comes to Internet and broadband Internet, especially when it comes to rural errs where the Internet has not gone and there's no infrastructure, we need to put more emphasis to that, and we need to find partners that can help us to build this infrastructure but not only in

Albania and other countries in the region have the same problem.

So probably if we develop some kind of mechanism, funding mechanism that we can put in place in order to increase this infrastructure, and improve it, it will be a very good step to develop digital skills.

Some other instruments, let's say because it doesn't matter only when you have good policies. As I said, you need also infrastructure but he need to start with something. Start with some pilot projects in the meantime that you are developing your policies. You can test them and see how better to improve your policies.

Some instruments that we have used are the TechSpace, which is kind of a start-up community institution. It was supported by the government and it's for youth to get more training, and to access the market and the start-ups to link with other start-ups in the Europe or abroad -- or more abroad.

The multifunctional center in the pyramid, this is a center that is will be -- we hope it might be somehow also regional at some point, but for the moment, it would be like a cohorting space for -- for young people, and it will also be focused on young people that are like high school students to develop their digital skills and we are implementing the TUMO. It's a program that is in some countries of Europe and now Albania to help develop digital skills from a younger age.

Now we are talking and probably going on with that pilot program -- project or program, it will be a pilot for first years.

So train women, young implementation from let's say, 25, 22, 25 years old up to 35, to develop digital skills but not only digital skills in general, but also digital skills that will help them to find work online. So how they can search for online platforms that offer jobs so they can complement their already -- because they might have already job. They can complement it with another online job. Or those women that were laid off during the COVID crisis and they can access online jobs. So we are going to try that. And also we are partnering with World Bank with that and we will see if it goes well, probably the government will do it as a permanent program and put it in its own incentives.

Now the short-term objectives when we talk about digital skills and how to develop them, we want to first

identify and promote good eLearning practices and this is
especially now because of the COVID crisis and it was a
need in our country to find those eLearning practices that
work and that are effective and the appropriate online
platforms that work well for teachers and communities. So
we are working on that, and we have tried some platforms
and we are in a good direction.

Then another objective is increase the capacity of the
online teaching. Teachers who use online platform but what
is the best method as teaching online. It's not the same
as you teach in the classroom. This needs to be understood
about I teachers. They need to be trained. And they need
to adapt their curricula. It's not the same curricula when
you teach online.

And also very important is to equip with digital
tablets or pads all the university students so they have
access. Many of them from what we have done as assessments
that we have done, they either assess -- they enter in the
online classroom through the mobile phones but they cannot
be -- it's not effective when you just enter from the
mobile phone, or they don't have a computer that is very
good computing, so equipping them with the right digital
tablets for this kind of classroom is a must.

Then preparing also and designing user-friendly
guides. You have to put this into guidelines that also
students and teachers that will come in the future, they
know how to be trained through the guidelines and also in
the Internet. The broadband Internet connection is not
good. There's no infrastructure. Giving them this, they
can provide and it will be a regional cooperation. We are
working a lot on the regional perspective, also with the
other countries of the Western Balkans because we believe
joining forces to go might have a greater impact for the
whole region.

So we have also put a lot of measures in the common
regional market action plan for digital skills and we hope
we will be able to achieve them.

In the medium term we want to invest more in the
digital structure and more support from other partners and
also from the EU on this objective. We also need to invest
in digital skills for jobs and so in the private sector,
through increasing the digital skills of SMEs. We are
working on that, we have -- we have developed a Working
Group in the past year, with all the main stakeholders and
with the help also of World Bank and we would like to take,

and we have identified a set of measures that we want to achieve in order to make eCommerce a better platform for Albania and use more in eTrading.

So to finalize some recommendations and proposed actions that we see for the future, for Albania, first we need to see the establishment of some legislation and leg environment acts, regulations, and standards for the digitalization in general but also to foster eCommerce which needs to be put in the legislation.

We need to increase the digital skills in SMEs through matches start-ups, existing start-ups with existing SMEs because they can help each other. Because start-ups on one side, they don't need a lot of, let's say financing or they don't require a lot of financing to give them some digital skills to the SMEs.

So to continue with the digitalization of the entire public services which we are at a very good rate and we should keep that work up.

Organize public information campaigns using digital services if response to the COVID-19 crisis but not only, also for the economic activities of different businesses, we need to work closely on encouraging the ICT development and we need to see what are those incentives to develop the ICTs within themselves and the private sector.

Providing the tablets also and online education. Application of blockchain technology. That's also a must and automatic recommendation of academic qualifications. We have also put those in the measure that we have in the common regional market action plan. So we will work together with the other countries to make this a reality.

And we -- we will start now skills need and qualification analysis. This will be done in the context of the smart digitalization strategy that we are currently developing to help -- and this will help to understand the shortages in skills, in general, but here the digital skills are comprised. So this aims to address them later with the strategy that we are developing.

Yeah.

That is it from my part.

>> ANAMARIA MESHKURTI: Thank you very much, thank you for sharing all of these important activities that you are planning and the different actions. I'm sure many of us learned a lot from this presentation. Now I have the pressure to invite Ms. Manana Ratiani, and I would ask the technical moderator to pull up the presentation.

>> MANANA RATIANI: Thank you very much. It's a great honor to present my pension. It's teachers professional development center, which is under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education and science of Georgia.

And what we are doing in terms of ICT skills development. It becomes an urgent topic. Next slide, please.

And personally, when we are speaking about the situation, in the recent year what happened within the world and my country, we were not so much prepared for this pandemic for these transitions that happened in educational space and it becomes very urgent to have those skills in all the level of education. Vocational education, and university educations and more.

And for all of them, for students, for pupils for lecturers and administrators, all the skills become very necessary. Ones so what happened in the world? We had more than 1,000 infectious diseases that were in the world in the recent 35 years and the results were Zika, MERS-COV, SARS, and HIV/AIDS.

And political priorities change as the crisis come under control that. Means we have not learned a lot from these diseases, from these epidemics and pandemics.

That means that we have to think twice when we are speaking about COVID pandemic because we don't need to abandon all of these platforms that we gained during the year. We have to adopt some kind of innovations and some kind of progress that will happen during that.

So it was also a possibility for the education system to develop in a very -- in a way to progress in the system so when we are speaking about the pandemic. It shows us that the access to the education is very important in the whole world, but the digital skills was set. We were speaking about the socioeconomic divides in the world and nowadays it's the digital divide shows us that equity issues are very important in the world and we have to think about the ICT skills, the ICT-based learning which is not possible if we are not having enough infrastructure in place. Even if they remove the rural areas, the students and the teachers don't have access to the Internet, that allows them to participate fully in the removed or distanced learning process.

So I think these gaps are important to understand really fully and then have some kind of initiatives, government-led initiatives for the locally led initiatives

which will focus on those digital divides which is a new term in our country.

Next slide, please. We see two graphs. We have the disparities in the world and the last column is the world and it shows that a share of the students who had access to the Internet is 53% and others don't have access to the Internet.

That means that they can't participate in learning process because of the lack of the access to the Internet. When we are looking on the regional aspects of this access to the Internet, we can see the Western European and North America and only 13% lack access to the Internet. While in Sub-Saharan Africa, 80% lack access to the internet.

And the pie chart, what is the solutions for the Roe mote and the distanced learning -- remote and the distanced learning. Online distance solution, 95 governments, and the students were covered within the distance learning process and also there were some initiatives about TV and radio solutions and we don't have information about the 38 governments what they are doing. But maybe some nongovernmental initiatives happened in those countries, but there's no information.

Next slide, please.

So at the beginning of the lockdown, when it happened in Georgia, it was in March. So we have the holy days at school during that period and we postponed our holy days to have some time, some pardon for transforming to the distance solutions in the education system, and we have some survey at the beginning of the pandemic and our teachers to understand what are the needs in ICT-based competencies, what they don't know and what they need to know and some types of training would they require from us.

And it was very interesting that it came out and we found that teachers are saying not only do they need to upgrade their competencies, competencies but the students lack ICT skills and it's not enough to fully participate in remote or distance learning.

Even our students are digital natives. You know, they know how to entertain themselves online, and how to show up online and how to chat each other and be very active in different social nets, you know. They look some kind of guidance on the educational platforms, how to participate fully, how to create that interesting homeworks, et cetera.

The other part is the parents and caregivers at home and those parents would have the ICT skills who facilitate

and support their Sides to be, you know, very effective in learning within the distance learning and that came out also here in Georgia. Also there were some other skills made for teachers. The technical skill on how to share and how to save the documents and share the different kinds of activities and assign elements within these platforms.

And then there was methodology for online learning and the third one was the lack of knowledge of the languages was one of the barriers for our teachers, you know?

And we started to create different kind of support for the teachers based on these other findings, next slide, please. And Ministry of Education and science, introduced with cooperation with Microsoft and this Microsoft set up all the classrooms, the virtual classrooms for the teachers and all the teachers there's 55,000 students and all the students set up and received the profiles and all the virtual classrooms were successful with the students at the schools and the universities, they have the freedom to choose which platforms to use for digital learning. So what came out we created a lot of guidance. And we create this for the students and the parents and it was really very important for them to have their knowledge and skills and we don't have knowledge for cascading the trainings and doing such kind of activities and so being online sharing and having, you know, interactive webinars. What was also important, we also introduced TV schools for the remote areas. And broadcasting public broadcasting has a special times for all subjects and those grades and they have the possibility to have the lessons TV.

Also it was very important to share open resources in Georgia language, because those teachers who know language, it was easier to find the resources to adapt those resources and translate with their kids. And for others, a special platform was created where we posted some materials based on the national grade.

Also, integrated a chat bot and they could ask questions and you don't need any extra, you know, human resources to sit there and answer those questions. And the ejournal was created and introduced to our teachers and students and that means the communicative part was very effective as far as the electronic journal.

And as the teachers need was understand better the Microsoft Teams and 16,000 teachers were trained in Microsoft teams. Next slide, and also the webinars were shown by the -- more than 1 million time because they were

subject specific and teachers were sharing their best experience and during that time, you know, with find out a lot of teachers are willing to share their experience to others and a lot of the groups were created online and the teachers were supporting each other. That was really very good to observe this type of cooperation.

Also we have an electronic magazine for our teachers and more than 400 articles were to created. And there were tips for pedagogy and millions of views and the download of the articles and then we published lessons for digital learning.

And I said there was a need for the parents to understand how to support their kids and a specific guideline, for the digital world that was uploaded on our web page and I think it was really very important for them to understand how to secure their kids if the kids are small and they can't secure themselves in online, you know, digital world. So next slide. I think it's very important that when we find out what are the skills our teachers need to that only pedagogy is important for them.

They know how no design and plan for face-to-face classroom teaching but they don't know what are the specifications for the online teaching and because of that, we are now creating and working and we will launch this training for them. What does it mean to create this online teaching materials and how to provide and proceed to the digital world, very interactive student-based teaching and how to be, you know -- how to assess and evaluate in online mode and what are the specifications for them and our students are creating that, and they have to understand how to do that. Also I mentioned that our teachers mentioned they need to overcome the language barriers. Because of that, now we are working on the specific training how to overcome the barriers, how to use that online translations and how to translate the web pages and also how to do videos, which are online and how to adapt those and how to share with each other with those translations, you know? To overcome those barriers and how to understand what those sources are available and how they could explain that to their students.

So there are a lot of things that our teachers need to upgrade, next slide, please.

And also we think that it's very important, not only for teachers to upgrade anywhere skills and competencies in ICTs but also for the principals of the schools and for the

managers, it's very important because they need to know how to create beautiful platforms not only for training the professional development of the teachers but also for the cooperation among the teachers and how to launch the workshops for the different kinds of subject groups and the teachers. It's very important to communicate in the digital platforms because it becomes very convenient for our teachers during this pandemic year.

So we don't want to abandon this type of progress that we have in our schools and educational institutions. And so we also want to support principals and administrations of the school to keep -- to remain the kind of virtual connections after the COVID.

And also it's very important to raise with the parents about the digital, to secure their students and their kids, you know, environment. How to protect and how to communicate with the electronic journal and how to be an online communicator with the school community, you know?

So we think about all the sides, about the parents, about the manager -- the management of the institutions and schools and about the teachers, how to progress them in ICT skills.

Next slide, please.

It's also very important and we decided in our center to create an educational ehouse, that means that for our teachers, it becomes very convenient to participate in online trainings. These online trainings save, you know, extra -- from extra time, or accommodation or for travel to the location and also from the -- you know, it's not paper-based. You don't need to print materials. You don't need to travel to somewhere. So it's environmentally better way to provide these trainings. And also it's very important because it's saving the time and it's very convenient for our teachers to access those online trainings. So during this year, we have all the trainings online, to -- and now we decided to create the educational ehouse, and if you will go to the next slide, please.

We decided to have -- I don't know is it visible or not for you? But we have here three parts, and what does it mean? First is for the principals and the managerial part of the school. For them, it's a management skills, how to develop them, and also how to develop support principles in -- in the educational leadership because it's very important when you are ahead and leader of the educational institution to understand the teaching and the

learning process which is the main thing that is happening within your institutions.

And also, we have the part for the teachers and we have the part for the parents, how to operate their skills. We have deeper -- we will have different kind of services for the teachers, the principals and parents and that will be training, online training and we will have some webinars for the discussions about the topics that will be guided by the expert of the field and also we will have some kind of platform for sharing the best practices because it's important to appreciate those teachers who are doing well and who want to share their practice with the others and also we will have as a special place for different kind of integrated projects, because those are becoming the future of the education system, because we need project-based and problem-based education in the educational system.

And also when we are speaking about the development of the different professional development for the teachers, as there will be a subject-specific findings and also there will be a pedagogical training and also we will have cross-cutting issues that we will develop there. It will be a sustainable development goal or goals for sustainable development and how to create those skills, how to support teachers to fulfill and embed those skills in their education fields and also there will be about the digital system, global citizenship which is becoming very important in the modernized global society.

We will have a different kind of literacy and entrepreneurialships and skill and also we will have ICT competencies development on this platform, and framings will be about that, and also about the actions because the teachers should be the researchers as they don't have to wait for others to help and support them in the center or at the ministry or -- because they have to make some researches and have decisions that will be evidence-based decisions.

So we think that it's very important nowadays to start the work and to develop such kind of educational ehouse for our educators. That will be a very helpful for them and they can find professional development training based on their real needs what they have.

So that's the final point from our center, and from me and thank you for your attention.

>> ANAMARIA MESHKURTI: Thank you very much. This was very, very interesting, and I really like the school for

parents. So I'm sure the kids will be very happy about
this. Thanks also for sharing with us the survey results.
It was very interesting, the various activities like the
chat-bot and the ejournal which will stay behind as we go
back and this is very, very great activities to be
implemented in the future and taken as an example. I will
change a little bit.

>> MASAHITO KAWAMORI: Ms. Gulsanna Mamediieva. She
has another commitment, and I would like to give the floor
to Gulsanna, you can share your screen.

>> GULSANNA MAMEDIIEVA: Yes, thank you. I'm -- just a
moment, I will, yes, share screen, and yes. I will work
with the screen. We have a ministry of digital
transformation and four main goals which is 100% of online
services and public services is available online.

6 million people of Ukrainians have these basic
digital skills. IT sector consists 10% of Ukrainian and
10% -- yes, Ukrainian GDP, contains IT sector and 95% of
Ukrainian controlled territory covered with broadband
coverage.

So this all aims to be strategically connected and
depends on each other. I would not repeat -- like I see
how professional approaches are in other countries and so
we do and we understand how the digital skills and the
infrastructure or connected and it should be solved
together. Developing digital skills we have two components
online and offline. Online is a bit slower now due to the
pandemic, but it is boosting actually the online platform
that we launched. Now you see it.

I will show you here.

Yes. This is the national platform only digital
skills where it consists of the serious courses. They are
built in the format of edutainment and has TV stars and
they are popular in Ukraine because we do it on actual
topics, for example, how to make your own blog.

We have social internship courses and how to create
business and how to -- the financial competencies for
entrepreneurs, the basics of the hybrid -- like the
cybersecurity and, yeah, the art beneficial intelligence
for the students and for the people in school, and so on.
We have 30 more courses and each of them has a high rank of
the auditory.

And this is also -- this is a digit-gram, this is a
national certificate that you can get to prove your level
of digital skills, and this is like -- it takes 30 to 40

minutes to take and it's acceptable in different platforms across country and you can find the work and, yeah, so on.

And it's very popular artist in the Ukraine. She's promoting -- actually it's a great solution to involve popular people to promote digital skills and make it fashionable in the Ukraine. And now with have also starting our digital European, actually digital skills week which is involving private companies to help us to promote. It's really huge network of the -- starting from the magazines, the phones or actually the -- like, many, many companies join this digital literacy, which is 22 to 28 of March.

And we see how effective it is. So we have courses. We have special platforms. And offline component is built of digital skills. It is built on the network of libraries which has computers and we made the course for trainers. So we teach trainers to teach these courses in the libraries. This is one component and it's working in some regions in the Ukraine where we have a good, actually, not high level of pandemic.

We have also the concept, the national concept and strategy approved by government of Ukraine, which is actually focused on digital competencies and aimed at digital competences in the different sphere of -- for teachers, for medical service, and so on.

This is -- I also would like to share one more result of our work. This is online school. All Ukrainian school is online and we have here the courses -- actually, that's for each grade. It's built for pupils -- for schools as an instrument for developing distance learning. And you can find, for example, different subjects for the fifth grade, and so we have it's only -- like, it's developing now, but it already has a lot of subjects for actually each grade in schools starting from fifth.

Wait one moment. We have digital skills. We have big component on child online protection. And they are spending more time online and we have a national strategy that will be approved really soon by the government of Ukraine. We have built a lot of instruments like chat-bot on cyberbullying and how did the chat bot helps the children to find advice and how to avoid cyberbullying.

And thousand we are working on all governmental platform on online safety. It's one of the component safeties of digital skills and it's going to be presented by the end of the summer this year.

Also there's two components. First component is education and prevention and the second component is response and instruments of filing the claim. So basically shortly that is it what we are doing in Ukraine and I would say to add the digital skills is a high priority but we understand that it's after the infrastructure building, so we have a lot of things to -- and work with many partners include ITU in this sphere to build actually broad band coverage and with international financial institutions to help us with this, because I think this is a pandemic and many would agree that Internet coverage and actually going with Internet as a rural area is one of the biggest priorities in the country.

Thank you.

>> ANAMARIA MESHKURTI: Thank you very much, Gulsanna focusing sharing this with us. I'm aware you have to go somewhere else and we have to let you continue. It was very inning to see how you are making digital skills fashionable in Ukraine. Very, very nice perspective on that. I would like to invite Ms. Liesbeth Ruoff van Welzen. Liesbeth, thank you all.

>> LIESBETH RUOFF - VAN WELZEN: Thank you all. I see you can go to the first one, perhaps because then you can, no first. The other way around. Yeah.

Because I wanted to show where the Netherlands is based and that I'm very pleased that I represent the KNVI. It's the Royal Dutch Society for Information professionals. The title royal, and we exist already 100 years.

If I listen to the stories of the others and, of course, the ICT industry, you would think how can they manage to get 100 years old? That's due to a part of our KNVI, professionals and that the information gathering, the libraries and the archives. They have already a long history but they have become digital and they are a part of our organization.

I'm very pleased to listen to you all and very pleased to see so many women. In my longstanding career in the IT try, I don't think I have ever been in a list of speakers with so many women, that's great. If that can continue, that's hopeful for the future.

The agenda. I want to set the scene a little bit because I'm from the eastern, EU and some advice and questions.

Next slide, please.

The Netherlands, I think it's important to take this

kind of information also into account when you are talking about the digital skills in the digital environment.

We have 17.5 million inhabitants and a density of a country of 400 or 500. You see the currency, 500 square kilometers.

Currency is the Euro and the language is Dutch and the GDP ranking of 17. Why am I saying that? Because money is involved and also the easiness of the country. And the easiness is that our country is flat. Perhaps you know the Netherlands from the cows that's also seen.

It has a lot of water and very houses near to each other and, of course, perhaps you know only the Netherlands from the tulips and windmills and windmills now for I am climate change.

In the first session, we are already talking about indexes or rankings or all of these kind of things. Within the Netherlands is part of the EU. And in EU we use the digital economy and society index. In setting the scene, it's important to realize that the Netherlands is the top of the rankings in Europe, with -- we are fourth with the Nordic countries, Finland, Sweden and Denmark ahead of us. You see the EU average is -- yeah, is still a long way from us. So we are in the forefront of what's happening -- of what -- what you can do or what has been done in the digital world.

In that index, we are looking at connectivity, use the Internet services, integration of digital technology and digital public services and, of course, human capital. And that's a little bit different from the -- I think the index is currently used within ITU or what I hear passing around.

I think it's -- it would be good if we can connect those indexes. But that's advice or an idea. Next slide, please. What is also important and I -- I didn't realize when I was asked for presentation that also I had to look at -- or I had to look, but education is still in the center of what is happening. Education is so important that it's not in the top of my mind. The top of my mind was the fact that with digital skills, we forget to focus it on different groups and that's an issue really in the Netherlands because we have consumers, citizens, professionals this general and ICT professionals and, of course, education at universities and basic education is also a domain, but in the usage of the -- of the digital world, you have also to focus on different -- to focus on those different groups.

I, in this presentation and the time given, I'm focusing on the ICT professionals. The others are addressed, for example, in the parents education school, I think, but also what I hear from the regional approaches. So you are looking at others. Certainly don't get them.

Next slide, please.

The work focused in the Netherlands around ICT professionals is dated started in 1982. And so that's almost 40 years ago now.

And it's -- the last and final edition of the idea of -- looking at professional -- the ICT professional world was made in 2017, but it was also the final and it's written in Dutch but it's called "Working In a Digital World."

And why we are -- this is the final. It's due to the fact that we are not looking any more to only our country and in our Dutch language. We had to admit that we have to go more international in an EU perspective or a global perspective, because you can't take your own perspective and toe cuss only on your own country because the digital world is going so fast, that you are -- that you have to work together to follow and to -- to use the possibility and the units given by the digital world.

So this last document took already eight years. So we started to look at what's happened in Europe and that's covered by the TC-428. And that's a very busy slide.

(Laughter)

And you see that's also one of the reasons why we are now doing it in an EU perspective, and not on our own. And this initiative is supported for a long time I saw that she used the pyramid used by Andre Leche. But anyway, it's good to see his name back.

Anyway, this CEN TC 428 is looking at four building blocks and the idea is to make standards, standards we can use everywhere in Europe. Not only to use but also that you can travel and use each other's knowledge and people around the European countries. It's made not only for Europe. I want everyone looking at it to use it too. It's started in Europe, but we hope that we can share it with a lot of other people. There is already one standard established that is the European cooperative framework. It has seven transferred aspects, combined with that framework, we have created a profile, a family tree and European ICT family profile, family tree, you see that on the right side and it has some basic profiles and for the

rest it has templates on how to develop your own template and your own rule. That's already in the standard. Currently the other three are on the development and most important for me currently and already almost done is the body of knowledge.

Because what we came -- now I'm part of this CEN TC 428, that's why I'm talking as we. That we still have not a common ICT knowledge established worldwide. So we think it's important to create some common knowledge and we do our best to set some ideas to go and bill a basic standard and you see that on top of it is all specialist information but there's some common ICT knowledge so that you can share worldwide, globally, how to approach and how to think about ICT. If we don't have that worldwide share of talks and language, it's difficult to use it worldwide.

I put also where possible the link to the websites where you can find absolutely more information than I can talk about. Next slide, please.

Then you think you have made a framework and you have made a standard. Is somebody using that standard? And yes, it's used. It's joined by and you see Germany and France, they have two different languages. By using the framework, they can share and they have different history in the IT world but using this combination of ECF -- sorry, somebody is walking in.

And we have to -- the Dutch government who is putting their old framework into the ECF to proceed in a more quick and easier thinking, although it looks like not that easy, it is easier.

Next slide, please. You saw, I didn't put the Ed could of ethics because that is still in Europe, in a starting phase or a development phase but internationally, and I may be a member of this group, and I play a role in it. We created a code of ethics and I think it's important that we share this worldwide and we share that this already exists because it gives some common ethical responsibilities and responsibilities specific to the ICT profession. And seven responsibility for those with the leadership position, looking at and responsible for ICT usage, the digital world.

Why is it important? Because we have to keep our trust in the digital world and if we do not use in some way or another, a digital or ethical code, it can be abused and I think the person from Intel was addressing already in AI, you see some abuse coming up.

And I see in the chat also that somebody has said DigComp, that's already a framework used for citizens and professionals.

This is the IFIP code of ethics and it can adapt to every culture and legislative system.

Next slide.

The challenges. And we had a head start. We started earlier than some countries. But with the head start, that makes you lazy. And so if I listened to, for example, to Ukraine or Albania, yes, they can build that all together, that's great. Because they have not that backlog of -- from '82, say, for example, in profiles. They can have a fresh start. That is not something that we can do in the Netherlands. We have that backlog. We have that information sitting in our -- on our back.

Yes, we say we don't use and we continue with working and sometimes it's very difficult because we have those large old systems.

If getting a head start, what we have forgotten is the literacy and I spoke in the beginning already of 70 million people, but we have more than 2 million inhabitants who are not able to read enough are literate enough to use the digital world and that's a big part and that's the part that you want to reach and reach out. It addressed different element.

In the Netherlands, I don't think we have the right instruments to address that properly. And we have to do it as quickly as possible, but because literacy, and being lazy creates the digital divide.

Yes, we have a lot of people who are at a good level, but not everyone is at a good level.

Next slide.

So my advice with the smiley is learn, copy and use what has proven to work, because we have not enough time to make all the mistakes ourselves.

And partner as much as possible. So that's why I'm so very pleased that ITU is taking this lead. Thank you so much for saying the time to listen to many.

>> ANAMARIA MESHKURTI: Thank you very much, Liesbeth. Thank you for sharing your perspective.

It was very, very interesting. I know it's 1:00 already, and we said that the session will send at 1:00, but we will take 15 more minutes because we gave some minutes from our session to the previous one and we will close it around 1:15.

And now I have the great pleasure to invite Ms. Nevena Praizovic who will be representing the Serbia perspective and you have the floor.

>> NEVENA PRAIZOVIC: Thank you very much.

I will present the digital skills development in the republic of Serbia. So I will change slide are you?

>> ANAMARIA MESHKURTI: Or moderator will do. So just say next slide.

>> NEVENA PRAIZOVIC: Next slide, please.

Last year, in February, the government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the strategy for digital skills development in the Republic of Serbia. This strategic document was adopted from the year 2020, to 2024. Next slide. We identified four priority areas. This is the education, citizens, are labor market and ICT professionals. This four priority areas, we defined in accordance with the new skills agenda for Europe. Next slide. We have one overall objective of the strategy and four specific objectives, which are defined in accordance with the priorities. The oral objective is to improve the digital knowledge and the skills for all citizens, including the members of vulnerable groups. And, of course, in order for the ICT and to meet the needs of the economy and the labor market.

So, first goal is improving digital skills the education system, the second one is improving the digital skills for all citizens for developing digital skills in relation to the needs of the labor market and the fourth lifelong learning of ICT professionals. Next slide.

Strategy for digital skills development is drafted in accordance with EU digital competencies framework for citizens which offers tools to improve citizens competencies and identifies the key components of digital competence in five areas, information and data literacy, safety and problem solving.

Next slide.

For the implementation of the strategy, our plans are that we will have two action plans. First one is for implementation of the strategy in the period 2021 to 2022. And second one, for period 2023 to 2024.

Next slide.

Action plan -- first action plan proposal is drafted. The ministry of trade are, tourism and telecommunications as a policymaker has started a procedure initiating public debate for this project. The public debate will last for

20 days and it is expected that action plan will be adopted in June this year.

Next slide. When it comes to the implementation of the strategy, I would like to say the role of partnerships is very important in this procedure, because, according to the action plan proposal, numerous measures and activities will be implemented in cooperation with our partners. This is USAID project, corporation for growth and propulsion, new literacy and then the UNICEF office in Serbia and cooperation with the European organization for security and cooperation in Europe.

Of course, there's the Ministry of Education and the government office for IT and eGovernment. So crucial thing is partnership and cooperation with other stakeholders, because digital skills topic is topic that needs a multi-stakeholder approach. Next slide.

Improving digital competencies in the education system. We identified two items. Providing conditions for learning and upgrading curricula for acquiring digital literacy.

When we talk about digital skills for all citizens, we all know that citizens need digital skills for everyday activity. How to pay a bill online, how to buy something and pay for it online. So within this objective, we have several awareness, improving digital skills for citizens at the local government letter, et cetera.

Next slide. Then we speak about labor markets. We all know that digitalization process has already covered all areas of society and the economy. So digital skills are required for almost all jobs. So with this goal, we have several measures, meeting the needs of labor market for digital skills at all levels and promoting all opportunities in ICT sector. Improving cooperation between relevant institutions, public sector, private sector, nongovernmental organizations and developing digital skills so employees including public administration, employees with a focus on digital skills are that related to the specific of the workplace.

Lifelong learning of ICT professionals. It's the fourth objective in the strategy and thea plan. Numerous studies indicate that there will be tens of millions of jobs in the coming years with those of advanced digital skills in terms of cybersecurity, the Internet of Things, mobile applications, et cetera.

So within this goal, we defined several measures

increasing research capacity in the ICT field and promoting lifelong learning, monitoring the number of young people, especially women educated in training in ICT professions and monitoring the needs of the economy, and ICT sector.

Next slide. I hope the next time we will speak about the implementation of our plans and the results in this field. Thank you very much for your attention.

>> ANAMARIA MESHKURTI: Thank you very much. This was really great and thank you for this very concise and presentation. Really appreciate it. We will be having the breakout rooms and you are leading us directly into the right place.

I don't want to stand between anybody and lunch. And I would suggest that I thank all of our speakers for joining us, and we hold to our questions for the afternoon as we will be going into breakout rooms with the audience and I saw a couple of questions and messages coming in the chat, and I'm sure that many audience members would like to discuss with you more in detail about the different activities that you have done and the different plans and programs you plan to implement in the future.

If you all agree, I would like to -- we end this session now, and we will revert back at 2:00, where we will have a quick presentation on the toolkit on the guidebook on the assessment of the digital skills from one of our ITU colleagues and then we are going to dive directly into the breakout sessions and we will have a little bit more explanation later on how those will work. That's where we will discuss all of this and come out with probably some more recommendations and solutions. So thank you very much again to all of our speakers for joining us and I will see you later and in the breakout sessions and we will revert back at 2:00 and I hope you have a very good lunch and see you at 2:00.

Thank you.

[Lunch break]

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