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WSIS FORUM 2022
HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE: ICTS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND LDCs

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     >> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Good afternoon to everyone joining
us. Good morning, good evening, to those joining us from across
the globe. Welcome to this WSIS Forum 2022 session on
High-Level Dialogue: ICTs for Developing Countries and LDCs. We
have different speakers with us today and the time is limited.
Let me introduce myself, I'm the Chair of the ITU-D Study Group
2, Ahmad Reza Sharafat, without further ado, I would request
that our Deputy Secretary-General from ITU give us his opening
remarks.
     Malcolm, you have the floor.
     >> MALCOLM JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Good afternoon
to everybody in the room. Good morning, good afternoon, good
evening to those online.
     Thank you for those that were allowed to come to Geneva
to join us remotely, it is the experience of the last two WSIS
Forums and we have greater participation through doing that in
a real setting and we'll continue this way. We have remote
speakers as well, of course, even in this session.
     Welcome to everybody here in the room and online. We're
very pleased that this session and the special track on ICTs

for developing countries and LDCs is being coorganized between ITU and the U.N. bank for LDCs. We're grateful for that collaboration.

As I'm sure you all know, we have 2.9 billion people around the world still unconnected and that most of these are in the developing countries and in particular in the LDCs and, of course, the majority of the population in those countries live in rural areas so bringing connectivity to the rural areas, that's the real challenge. Certainly from an industry point of view, you don't have the benefit of the return on investment you get in the urban areas.

So there needs to be incentives to the operators to bring connectivity to the rural areas, something we need to look at and of course, it is not just the connectivity problem, I mean, a lot of people can't afford even if they could get connected, they can't afford to get connected, the prices have to be brought down and a lot of people are not aware of the benefits and don't have the skills if they were connected. There are a lot of issues to be addressed, not least, the fact that many of these areas don't have electricity, they don't have the energy supply anyway.

In fact, if you map the problems with connectivity with the problems with access to energy, electrical supplies, it is almost the same. It is a similar problem everywhere. We need to identify what the problems are and ways to overcome them and it is only through discussions like this, you know, exchanging good ideas on how we can waitress the challenges that we can overcome this particular problem. That's the nice thing about the WSIS Forum, people just come here to exchange good ideas on how we can, you know, solve some of the problems and bring the benefits of the technology to people everywhere.

It is a positive output as well to see the actual difference on the ground as a result of the WSIS process, stocktaking and the prizes as well. I hope we'll have a very good exchange of views on this.

Of course, this week backs up to the start of the Telecom conference which is unfortunate and puts strain on people to attend two events and a strain on the Secretariat too of course, and we have three world conferences this year instead of the normal just one so it is a challenging year for everybody. Because of the COVID, of course, these things were postponed and we couldn't do anything other than what we have, but hopefully this discussion, you know, can also be fed into the WTDC next week which has the theme of Connecting the Unconnected for Sustainable Development and the output of that, again, can go to the U.N. conference on LDCs, the secretary part is next March. It is an opportunity for us to contribute. To overcome

this challenge and look forward to a good exchange with you this afternoon.

Thank you very much.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much, Malcolm, for your opening remarks. Of course, connectivity, affordability, the existence of utilities, skills, they are key elements in providing meaningful ICT services to the people across the globe.

Without further ado, I would like to go to our speakers. The first speaker is Dr. Taffere Tesfachew, acting managing Director of U.N. technology bank for least developed countries. As Malcolm mentioned, they are a cosponsor of this session and we have a video message that will be displayed.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: While this is being fixed, my apologies for this technical glitch. While this is being fixed, I would like to continue with our session. We are a little bit short of time. I would like to ask Dr. Khalid Alik Al-Quradalghi, the Director of information systems and advisor to the President office planning and statistical authority in the State of Qatar.

I have two questions for you: First, what is the role of the planning and statistics authority to support the Digital Transformation in the country of Qatar? Second, could you please let us know how is Qatar performing with the knowledge economy indicators?

>> KHALID ALI AL-QURADAGHI: Thank you so much.

First of all, I would like to thank the organizer for such a great Forum and meeting. Regarding the first question, the plan and statistic plays an important role in meeting the requirements of Digital Transformation in the government strategy by making full use of modern technology and the latest programmes, applications and digital platforms. Information technology, ICT, the current era is considered the main engine of societies with their various institutions and entities and through which faces the development process if the countries. With this regard, the full support was given to such a group of important projects and plans in the country that are fully aligned with the national development strategy as well as supporting a number of initiatives from the four pillars of the Qatar national visions 2030 which are human, social, economic, environmental and also with the Qatar eGovernment strategy. Regarding the questions, beyond the Internet connection and also beyond governing Internet Society, it was 100% by two operators by phone and radio, we're talking now more about the

digital economy and knowledge-based economy. For that regard, the planning and statistic authority is the official source of all of the data and statistic and operation of the State of Qatar as it works to provide the statistical data to users in all sectors, government, private agency, regional, international organizations and individuals. For that regards, we actually have annual report, I would like to share with you the latest report regarding the knowledge-based economy. There are five actually main indicators in that report related to eGovernment index, the first one, with a source of United Nations, Qatar achieved in 2020 66 among the 193 countries and regarding the second indicator, it is the E. participant index, the Department of Social affairs, Qatar achieved 77 among all of the countries and regarding the third indicator, which is networking index, Qatar achieved 42 among other countries and regarding the fourth indicator, the information development index, Qatar achieved 39 among all of the countries which is high ranking compared to other countries and of course, the last one, Qatar achieved 68 among all of the countries. You see how Qatar is performing and achieving well in these indicators for the knowledge-based economy and we wish the best for all other countries.

I tried to be within 3 minutes.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much. Thank you very much for useful information that you provided. Congratulations on your achievements and thank you again for staying within the 3 minutes limit that we have.

Next we go to the next speaker, Dr. Elsadig Gamaledledden Karar from Sudan.

First question, it is which technologies should become a policy priority is if policy adoption and play as role in harnessing connectivity gaps in alleviating connectivity gaps in LDCs.

The second question, what Sudan is using its connectivity and strategy to bridge the digital divide.

Sir you have the floor, please stay within 3 minutes. Thank you.

>> ELSADIG GAMALELDEEN KARAR: Thank you, Your Excellency.

It is an honor for me to participate in this high-level meeting. I'm happy to be physical again. Let me on behalf of myself and the Government of Sudan to recognize the continued support and collaboration with ITU while here. We have regular workshops now in ITU and we have successfully managed to with ITU to build a lab for IoT, a regular lab, one of the biggest labs in the region and there is a workshop now on this and Sudan has benefited from the unique geographical position and the relations with African and Arab countries as well as is willing to play the role of facilitating, harmonizing the values and

the visions of the upcoming events.

Regarding the question, for question one, asking about technology, I think that fixed and mobile broadband technologies and wireless broadband technologies such as HSB and other, they have a key role in filling the gap of broadband in the least developed market. Also, the accelerated technologies, defining the technologies and these are said to be technology to revolutionize the Internet with more than a third of the world still offline. Since satellite consultation can help connecting the unconnecting and the bridge of the digital divide in remote and rural communication behind, and for sharing that, now we're using one of the company operators, it is now distributed widely, the using of the voice and the data. If I ask which is the biggest distributed, voice or data, I think that the answer is not voice but data. People like to connect with data. They use the technologies with small, some type of processing or some type of a wi-fi link and people use to connect to this wi-fi and use the social media for voice calls.

Some solutions to addressing the gaps with the last mile connectivity is needed to be leveraged and supporting LDCs. Government needs to adopt initiatives, strategies and business model for improving broadband penetration.

Regarding the question two, what is Sudan using and connecting strategy to build the digital divide, we propose that all of us know that the pandemic has shown us how much we need the connectivity and how important the Internet is, it is important for us and in our country, believe me, approximately 40% of our people are not online. In this gap in Sudan we're using the Universal Fund and connectivity models in partnership with telecom providers to connect remote areas and providers and we start to build our towers in rural areas and we use this form of USF. Our areas are poor rest with communication. And we have used this fund well and we use that and the operators have built that site and we have used -- we have had problems with the power on this side and we have looked at the potential of connectivity business models which will be increasing Telecom providers to connect less and also there are significant developments and business benefits getting more people online and a strong alliance and clear global standard will be needed to make the connectivity work, and the initiatives such as ITU, UNICEF, GIGA, it will help in Sudan and we're happy to work with them and to take advantage of the products and are developed.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you for the remarks. Congratulations on your achievements in the country of Sudan and as you said, 40% are unconnected. That shows that we have many things to do.

I'm being told that the video message is now ready to be shown and I invite you to listen and see the video message.

>> TAFFERE TESFACHEW: Excellencies, distinguished guests, panel members, ladies and gentlemen, let me first thank WSIS for the opportunity to contribute to the WSIS Forum 2022. I wish to convey my apologies for not being able to participate in person.

However, with this brief message, I wish to reiterate our commitment to work closely with WSIS and collaborate with colleagues at ITU in advancing the Digital Transformation agenda in LDCs. The decision has a great emphasis to the connectivity challenge in LDCs, it is common as these are the poorest countries in the world with formidable structure impediments, particularly in the development of new technologies.

In this context I'm pleased that WSIS and the U.N. technology bank are joining forces to bring this important issue to the forefront of the Development Agenda.

In responding to some of the questions posed to me, I wish to highlight the following.

Regarding the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in my view, COVID-19 has been a wake-up call to LDCs and the shock generated during this process made it abundantly clear that in the 21st Century Internet connectivities is no longer a luxury but an essential requirement and enabler of the economic, social development and a lifeline to every day interactions.

The majority of the 1 billion people who live in LDCs are covered by mobile broadband signal, only 25% are connected online. This usage gap must be addressed urgently. In this connection, it is understandable that improving Internet access in LDCs has been considered an important target worth pursuing as part of goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The fact that this target remains unmet, the exceptions being Bangladesh and Bhutan is a signal to the international community to act without delay and to bear in mind that the vision of meeting the SDG by 2030 will not be achieved unless such persistent challenge in LDCs are addressed. With regard to how LDCs can have access to meaningful connectivity, a good starting point, it is to conduct a needs assessment at the U.N. technology bank does for LDCs and while we know that LDCs need a wide range of technological inputs it is critical to point -- to pinpoint the exact needs in connectivity and enabling ecosystem necessary to build the capacity for Digital Transformation.

The critical areas particularly the investment infrastructure, skills, incentives to encourage the private sector involvement in digital economy and the developing

institutions that facilitate the rapid development of new technologies.

The issue of increasing digital skills gap and affordability, the key challenge here is how to engage use so that from an early age they acquire the basic knowledge for the uptake in the new technologies and in this respect, an interesting initiative, the U.N. technology bank is currently piloting in Niger based on a model based in Turkey is the technology maker lab targeting high school students and providing training on robotics and coding, design and production, software technologies and cybersecurity among others. We hope that this will be replicated in other LDCs and contribute greatly to skills, skill information and digital technology.

Let me once again thank you for allowing me to share this brief message.

I wish you a successful meeting and I look forward to the outcomes of your discussion.

Thank you very much.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: I thank you, Dr. Taffere Tesfachew, acting managing Director for U.N. technology bank for least developed countries for the interesting message, the useful information contained in the video message and we definitely would benefit from the information and wisdom that is part of his video message.

Thank you.

Next we go to Chairman and President of the Board of Directors of the National Communication Authority from Timor-Leste and I have two questions for you, sir.

The first question, as you are a Telecom regulator, what roles do you see national Telecom regulators play in advancing the ICTs in developing countries and second question, of course, it is the continuous of the first one, what would be the situation, what roles the regulator would play in your country Timor-Leste?

>> JOAO OLIVIO FREITAS: First of all, thank you.

In regard to your question, in my view, it is that the national Telecom regulators need to play the enabler role, I mean, when we do our usual roles like licensing, spectrum planning, management, regulating competition and need to be mindful that the regulatory measures we introduced would result in the environment to promote more investment in networks and services to our population.

For example, we have adopted a spectrum pricing regime that provides servicer providers to provide more advanced services and 5G networks in urban areas. Most of the municipalities and cities covered by 4G services.

In line with that, the Telecom regulators in developing countries and LDCs may need to take on the responsibility of providing capacity building to other stakeholders and the areas requiring the digital literacy, cybersecurity, even consumer rights and protection and I think that my key message here is that unlike the setup of a developed country where you would have many specialized agencies, regulators in developing countries and LDCs find themselves a wider range of duties.

One among them, it is to be the enabler in promoting ICTs take up in the country that they serve.

Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much, Joao Olivio Freitas, for your remarks.

Of course, regulators have different duties and you pointed out the main important issues that they're facing.

Thank you very much your remarks.

Next we go to Dr. Alarcos Cieza, team leader for sensory functions, disability and rehabilitation from the World Health Organization, WHO. Welcome, Dr. Alarcos Cieza.

I have two questions for you, Madam, first, it is why is the topic of hearing loss prevention relevant and the second question is and what are the key messages in this regard.

Madam, you have the floor.

>> ALARCOS CIEZA: Great. Thank you. Thank you.

Actually I have the messages that I would like to summarize in three different words, the first word, it is risk, the second one, solution and the third one, it is power. Why risk? I'm going to bring to your attention that today if we concentrate on young people, there are one billion young people that are at risk of hearing loss simply for the way how they use ICTs. That is, if I make the comparison between technology like, for example, a car and ICTs, this is because ICTs -- while a car has a seat belt, for security of the driver and the persons in the car, ICTs that we're talking about usually do not have the security measures. It is not only because of the ICTs itself but it is also the way how we use them. The way we use them, the amount of use and to think of yourself how much this use has increased during COVID-19. If we have two hours of use of devices in ICTs probably before the pandemic on a regular basis we have gone to at least 10 hours a day or more. The important message here is in relation to risk, it is that once ICTs become available this risk of over 1 billion people will increase expedientially and so please factor this in, in your deliberations. That's the first point.

The second point, it is solution. The word solution, why? Because ICTs have also this solution, we can include in ICTs those security measures that avoid putting people, for example,

at risk of hearing loss. Here the ITU and the World Health
Organization has already done some homework and has developed
a standard for safe listening that can be incorporated and can
be included in the devices that control and put the seatbelt
in the ICTs.

We launch those standards a couple of years ago. I
remember we have done that at WHO coming together to launch those
standards. Just to bring this to your awareness. The solution
can be included in the ICTs in terms of security and not putting
people at risk.

The third word is power. Looking at the people on the
role, looking at the different panelists, you have the power
to make it happen, to make it happen in terms of not only making
ICTs available into low, middle income countries as much as
possible but also doing it in an appropriate way so that nobody
is put at risk. Use also that power, use also the work that
ITU and WHO has already done.

That's from my side. Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much, Dr. Alarcos
Cieza, for your very methodical approach to some of the dangers
that the world population would be facing if not careful in the
use of ICTs. We all have to be aware of the fact that the use
of ICTs sometimes need to be -- they need to be moderation, the
ICTs, and thank you very much, Dr. Alarcos Cieza, for bringing
to the attention of this session this important fact.

Next we go to the architect and President of OCCAM,
Dr. Pier Paolo Saporito, observatory for cultural
communication and audiovisual in the Mediterranean and in the
world, Italy.

Sir, I have one question for you, considering your pivotal
role in the field of digital innovation and ICTs resulting among
other important activities in your participation in projects,
how in your opinion can LDCs have access to eServices and
actively participate in the digital revolution.

You have the floor, sir.

>> PIER PAOLO SAPORITO: Thank you.

Just to summarize the programme that was launched,
allowing the component of the U.N., it was in 2001, to fight
poverty through ICT and the main action was to create the ICT
village in rural areas and in terms of providing the
connectivity, many ways, frequencies, satellite, to spur the
situation and to have a solution basically, it is important and
the frequency, the security, it would be open to the hospital,
to the school, to eGovernments. This is a great resource and
often they said to the companies and the costs are becoming high
and the hospital shares that, it is impossible. The same, it
is about the eLearning and for security, for security, it is

a programme from the European villages, in 6 countries, where we transfer the knowledge of 16 universities, easy solutions with the specific robotic devices.

It is easy to use that with the platform we have enlarged.

I want to remember two example, one, it is in Rwanda, we work there had in 2007 and launched E. connected for after architectural framewords it was an important initiative and Rwanda took charge very, very well.

The second, it was where we have created the launch of some initiative for the local community and also to open the market for provisions and in that country we have the ability of public frequencies immediately to have that connection.

In that, we have all of our -- we have at the U.N., the title, it is two years and we have discussed how to build the next digital society and more equitable.

Thank you, Chairman.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much, Dr. Pier Paolo Saporito for your remarks. Thank you for the information you provided to us.

Our next speaker is remote. We have Ms. Onica Makwakwa, head of Africa, Alliance for Affordable Internet, world wide Web Foundation. Madam, I hope that we have you online with us.

>> ONICA MAKWAKWA: Yes.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you.

I have two questions for you, how can LDCs have access to meaningful connectivity and second question, gender inequality, it has been increased in LDCs, how can the international communities support LDCs to address the challenge of this inequality, gender inequality.

You have the floor, Madam.

>> ONICA MAKWAKWA: Thank you.

Thank you.

To meaningfully connect, it is when you can access the Internet at the right speed of at least no less than 4 gigs of data and using an appropriate device, at minimum, a smartphone with access to unlimited broadband either at home, school or work and they should be able to have daily access for us to say that they're meaningfully connected as opposed to a basic Internet connection. Our countries can achieve meaningful connectivity and first we met adopt the standards similar to how we did for affordability with the one for two target of 1 gig of data at more than 2% of average monthly income. It is also time for us to move beyond one gig of data per month as the average standard for connectivity if we want people to be meaningfully connected and move also towards access to unlimited broadband Internet to enable the remote working and remote learning.

Three things which are LDCs, which they must do, to advance meaningful connectivity and we need to invest in connectivity both through infrastructure investments as well as policy frameworks to be intentional about advancing affordable and meaningful connectivity. There is a growing divide between urban communities and it exists before COVID and it is even expanding post-COVID. There is also a new divide arising amongst those who are already online based on how they are connected, whether they have access on a daily basis or have access once every three months, which is the current standard for a connected person or if they're connected through a smartphone and have adequate digital skills to navigate online.

We need to cooperate.

I think, you know, the World Bank issued a report saying that for Africa alone we need 1,099,000,000-dollars invested in infrastructure development.

Even if private sector puts half of that in we still need governments to allocate resources towards this digital development for broadband, for advancing broadband and connecting those that are currently unconnected. It is going to also take development partners collaborating with governments and private sector and initiatives such as public private partnerships to be able to really advance what is needed.

We also need to measure the results. We must collect gender segregated data and continually measure the progress on how we're connected to communities and this brings me to the gender issue and the digital gender divide, it is worse when you look at meaningful connectivity vis-a-vis basic connectivity so for example for Colombia, there is only 1% digital gap for connectivity and however, when you look at meaningful connectivity that gender gap jumps to 70% and the reality, it is that the digital gender gap exists because of the inequalities that already exist in our society. It is important for us to recognize this and to begin to be intentional around how we are inclusive and pushing for digital equality in the plans.

Mainstreaming gender in ICT policies in all ICT policies is really critical for us to be able to reach the kind of digital inclusion and digital equality that we desire.

Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much for your remarks, Ms. Onica Makwakwa and for the way forward in terms of providing meaningful access to connectivity and LDCs and how the inequality and gender inequality could be addressed.

Our last speaker, last panelist, is Ms. Mei Lin Fung, who is the Chair, cofounder of the people centred Internet and

impact network. She is well-known in ITU and in ICTs for her contributions and, Madam, I have two questions for you, first, what roles -- what role can women play in ICTs in developing countries and second, it is how can we engage the contribution of talented women in this important topic?

>> JOAO OLIVIO FREITAS: Thank you. I'm thrilled to be here.

The people centred Internet stands for Internet of the people, by the people, for the people. This is important for us to remember how the Internet came, all of this talk of Digital Transformation and contribution to LDCs, two years ago, WSIS was not talking like this. COVID happened. I want to remind you of the beginning of the Internet, the beginning of the Internet is where universities connected to each other because professors wanted to collaborate and research. This was the national research and education networks, but then what happened was that for example in the University of Nairobi in Kenya, there was a young graduate student and helped to install the Internet in Nairobi. 30 years later, he was permanent Secretary of ICT in Kenya and when the idea of mobile money came up he remembered the power of innovation and he opened the way for them. If you want to know how mobile money started in Africa, it was because of the Enrens. Now, women in the world, LDCs, it is a chance for you to bring the Internet to your communities. We don't have to fight with men because it often looks like this panel where we are walking in and why should we listen to a woman, no. Become the pioneer like this was, bring the Internet meaningful broadband connectivity to your community, to your family, to your neighborhood. The Enrens could bring -- could connect to the schools, the schools could connect to the parents and the suppliers and the teachers in that community. We can spread the Internet the way it was meant to be, fueled by friendship. This is why women should take part in this because it is for our children, because it is for the future generations, because we want an Internet fueled by friendship, a digital future that is not designed for profit for a few.

Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much for your encouragement and showing us the way forward for women to be more active in developing countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have come to the end of remarks by our panelists. Now we can have our next phase, which is a discussion with panelists and participants. I'm opening the floor for you to pose any questions that you may wish to the panelists and benefit from a two-way exchange of views.

Any requests for the floor? Yes, my colleague from

Norway.

>> Thank you. Joseph from the University of oslo.

I would like to approach you, Alarcos Cieza, for what we call digital health promotion which is the next step of community involvement through health which is an example of what we call the non-profitable services or content which is not really preferred by traditional commercial operators.

Any ideas of how we can foster that?

>> ALARCOS CIEZA: I'm happy to connect and to connect with my colleagues responsible for health promotion and we have the empowerment at WHO, the World Health Organization the health promotion and all of us, we're always happy to collaborate and also to really look for new initiatives that make possible the objectives that we have, that is that everyone achieve the highest standard of health. Happy to connect and put new contact with colleagues.

Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you.

Any other questions? Remarks? Please.

>> Hello. I work for the universal postal Union, I have a question for you, I want to know if you're also considering mental health and in cooperation with the ITU and any other agencies? I mean, the gap between the physical world and the Digital World is getting closer and closer and I see us automating closer collaboration with the private sector and the U.N. agencies on this regard because as you know, social media has become very critical point and I will take into consideration the mental health that this is impacting everyone in the world. It is I think an important topic anding it we could do better. Yeah.

>> ALARCOS CIEZA: Thank you for that comment.

Indeed, at WHO and ITU, we did work in common for the impact and also the use of social media, that it has in mental health and also mental health conditions although for people with mental health conditions. We're very happy to continue this collaboration.

We have also a common -- we have in the past a person working actually in both teams and we'll be very happy to continue to do so.

Also one point I would like to bring up to your attention, very often when we talk about developing ICTs we don't think of people who have a specific impairments and that is hearing impairment, vision impairment, mobility issues, that we need to take into consideration also in terms of accessibility and also from the perspective of equity. Everyone should be able to access ICTs on an equal basis with others. Of course we're concentrating today on the perspective of low income countries,

if you think in LDCs and in high LDCs, that we make our ICT accessible and fundamental, and here I will point out to the collaboration project that we have conducted with ITU and it is the developing of standards for accessibility of telehealth services. Also in connection with COVID-19 because telehealth services, the application of telehealth services has increased tremendously during COVID-19.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much to my colleague from the UPU, the answer I hope was satisfactory.

Thank you very much.

>> Thank you very much.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: We have a request for the floor from a remote participant. I would like to invite you to please take the floor.

>> Can you see me now?

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Yes. Yes. We can see you. Please go ahead.

>> Okay, Thank you for giving me the floor.

I'm from Cameroon and also Swiss and my question is to all of the panelists who can answer my question, in Cameroon we have less than 50% of population who have Internet connection and we have so many rural areas and in our country also we have polygamy, a lot of men can marry many women and the women are not -- they just have the mobile phone for some of them and my question is how can the private sector also be involved to help regulators who facilitate the access to women because in our organization, the health programme, we need equal gender and this is a big gap for people in our African countries also that is not easy. In Switzerland, there have been some countries that ever referred to help, but how can we look at what's happening, how many broadbands we need, I think that the capacity building has to be heavily enforced and other participants I would ask to help my original country Cameroon to strengthen the capacity and to help African women, particularly rural women to have access, please.

Thank you, that's my question.

>> MEI LIN FUNG: I would like to respond.

It is wonderful for you to speak out this way. I seriously recommend that we connect over the Internet and that we talk about the national research and education network in Cameroon and how they can actually reach out to the women in your community. Let's talk offline. Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much, Madam Mei Lin Fung. I hope that you and our friend from Cameroon can connect in a meaningful, nice way and exchange of views and ideas and find solutions to the problem that was posed which is a serious problem in fact.

>> I want to speak about an experience that we have had in our country, one of the private companies have made agreements with the mobile operators and they work on something called low cost sites, you don't need to have a site with 70 or 40 meters, you just need approximately 12 or 20 meters of site while holding off, and that's very successful, and we give this an opportunity to work, they built 50 sites in three months. 50 sites, in 48 different rural area sites. So successfully now, the sites, they're born, working well, and we try to facilitate everything to work, we give them -- we support them to work.

This comes from the private sector n three months, 48 different areas, just 12 meters you can build a site, in one day.

Also they successfully, we have the problems with security.

So you have the people in the community, and we say we can build that site for you, we can connect you, and they have that in the safety area, something like a market or something like that.

This community, they're also taking -- looking for the safety of this site. Successfully this site, it is not -- it is 15 sites in 48 different areas.

So this is an idea that can be helped.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much. Yes, there is proposed some solutions and exchange of best practices that have already been experienced in his country to reduce the cost of expanding the infrastructure and in turn reducing the cost of providing service and making it more affordable.

Thank you very much, sir.

We have a request for the floor from a panelist. You have the floor, Madam.

>> Thank you for that question and it really helps us to really understand what's happening with gender in particular (Onica Makwakwa) my contribution is on two main things. One, it is that our research shows that universal service and access funds remain an untapped resource for advancing gender equality. There is enough models that you have seen from other countries where these funds are used to develop skills, to develop the programmes for Women and Girls as well as to help subsidize devices for Women and Girls in communities. I would say that one of the things that we need to really -- something we have to look at, a system, it is to really understand universal service funds and revamp them and revitalize them so that they actually place gender inclusion and equality at the centre of their work.

Two, I'm pleased the previous speakers just gave us

examples of different innovative technologies for expanding access where you may not have been able to connect people, but I think going along with that, we need to not shutout the idea that we also need different and innovative financial models because sometimes the connectivities, it is not there, there is no financial, no business case for the private sector players to connect in those areas, that brings me to community owned networks and a space where women have played an important role to really look at those areas and connect and to develop their own networks, the rural community networks and they need to be enabled, we have seen in Rwanda and Kenya regulations to be introduced for licensing community networks and we need to see more of that because we do know that areas where there are community networks, the rate of meaningful connectivity, it is even higher than where he it is just regular private mobile connections.

Thank you so much.

So two things, universal service funds and community networks. I think we need to get those around expanding and digital inclusion.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much, Onica Makwakwa, for emphasizing the importance of the universal service funds and also community network in order to provide more affordable services to the general public.

Let's see if we have other questions.

Madam, you have the floor.

>> Thank you very much.

Thank you, Chair, for leading a very engaging panel discussion. My name is Carolyn from Kenya, I would like to ask a question and pose it to our fellow regulator. I think there was -- we talked about the regulations and the changes had more areas covered in the urban areas. If you could kindly elaborate on this. Thank you.

>> JOAO OLIVIO FREITAS: Thank you for the question. Well appreciate that.

So basely the regulator, we're a young regulator and while we're proceeding ahead to develop our Telecom network, at a certain point we also need to facilitate the operators with the spectrum. In order to organize the access of operators to the existing spectrum we use the study results which was prepared by the GSMA in 2017 for defining the spectrum pricing. From that study we take the pricing system there. Based on that, we define our price of the spectrum and actually before the implementation of that regulation we have to do public consultation when we listened and got the feedback from the operators, the quality operator, they agreed on the proposed price and we proceeded with that because certainly the condition

of each country is different and we cannot the implementation of the regulation and the countries to put that in our country as well.

Based on this condition, most of the conditions taken so, we decided to put a regime, the pricing regime that is good for our economy and social condition as well.

Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much. I hope that the answer was satisfactory to the lady from Kenya.

Thank you very much.

Yes, we go back to Norway.

>> Thank you.

I would like to bring a follow-up on the regulations because I really see that regulations as you just demonstrated, are regulations for commercial business, profitable businesses which at the same time means it is regulations against community networks and against ENRENs so the question is basically what can we do or recommend to ITU to put more focus on regulations for inclusion.

Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much. The name of the game is regulation for inclusion. I would like to ask my colleagues on the panel if they have any comments? Please.

>> JOAO OLIVIO FREITAS: Thank you so as a regulator, I'm a regulator and at the same time, using the Universal Access Fund we developed a specific programme that we call have with research and education network, it is developed under the regulator. By having this kind of programme, it is easy to adapt to our current situation where we can educate our people starting from the University. Once we educate our University students it will be easy for us to spread knowledge to their families without us going to each family and saying that is what we have to do and how to access it. From our side, as a regulator we're supporting the implementation of this kind and it depends from the regulators and I'm also proposing this one as well.

If from the ITU I would support this kind of a project as well.

Thank you.

>> MEI LIN FUNG: I think an area that regulation has not confronted, it is The Rights to data access. Community networks are a wonderful place in which the data is generated by the community and can the data be governed by the community which would then give digital assets to the women and the families which right now they have no control of because it was used by Google, collected by Facebook, held elsewhere, I recommend to the regulators and to the ITU to begin to examine the idea of data utilities, digital utilities. This is

necessary in electricity. Originally, the electricity, you
had to own a generator to access, it is kind like that now with
digital. How can we have a digital utility organized by the
people whose data contributed to the utility, we have proposed,
the people centred Internet proposed a digital utility for
scientific research. Up until now, it is done in a colonized
way, Western, advanced countries, they go to LDCs, collect the
data, they say help solve cancer, we're taking your blood, then
suddenly the people who gave the blood, they say my relative
has this kind of cancer, how can I get the results? Nobody wants
to talk to them. Yet, they contributed to the scientific
results. It is very important to think about how data sharing
can actually help science in a fair, equitable way. That's an
example of the kind of regulation that ITU can begin to provide
leadership in that would really address the inequities and bring
women to the table.
        >> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much for your
vision. Yes.
        Please.
        >> KHALID ALI AL-QURADAGHI: I have a final remark as we're
looking for the best opportunity and for the best Internet power
and coverage, we should also focus and for the most important
topics related to the data governance and the eGovernment,
eSolution, eBusiness, Big Data and so when you have the strong
database and the strong investment in the future.
        Thank you.
        >> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much.
        I understand that we have a request for the floor from
remote participant.
        You have the floor.
        >> Thank you very much, moderator.
        I'm from the technology bank. Really one of my apology,
I'm in a location where the data is not as great as it should
be, you won't be able to see me.
        I wanted to reiterate two points by -- it is really about
how to be in a position to enhance the capacity of the LDCs in
terms of one and accessing the connectivity and also in terms
of the capacity building to be able to utilize the data and also
to be a part of the data governance as the two speakers also
indicated and in the case of Timor-Leste, it is important to
build the capacity at the local level. For example, in the
universities, how can we be able to enable LDCs to be able to
manage their own data. Part of it, really it is to do with not
necessarily the lack of capacity but limited capacity that is
also coupled with limited infrastructure that's required for
them to be in a position to utilize and therefore it is really
important not to focus only on the capacity building but we need

to also invest a lot in terms of connectivity so that we will be able to utilize much of the data that's been mentioned.

This is really just the points to reiterate and to compare with the previous speakers on some of the inputs that need to be conveyed for the LDCs to benefit from connectivity enhanced skills that will then be -- in terms of the role of the ITU as well as that of the technology band, it really is to be able to advocate for the LDCs in terms of them being able to be provided with support.

By support here, supporting what the LDCs are really in need of rather than being told what they need. I think it is also a change in terms of how we can be in position to convey what the LDCs can be better supported to achieving their destinations.

Thank you very much, moderator.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much for your remarks from the technology bank and we do appreciate that.

Any other requests for the floor? Yes, Madam.

>> Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to start from the remarks of Mr. Johnson, he said about the challenges that developing countries and LDCs have regarding spreading the connectivity all other the countries. Among them, he said some countries have no electricity which is true.

I would add, Mr. Johnson, other country, including mine, are under the unilateral measures which prevent the countries from importing the medicines sometimes, my question is if the panelists can answer, it is a global need or a way of Sustainable Development or a goal of being connected and if the answer, if which of them, what is the plan regarding the differences between challenges? Thank you.

>> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you. I turn to Mr. Johnson to provide the thoughts on this question or other colleagues on the panel?

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: Thank you for that follow-up.

To my point, as I said, in talking to people from the electricity, energy sector, they have also pointed out for some years now that there is this mapping of lack of connectivity, lack of access to electricity so the two sectors I believe could work much closer together bringing electricity, supplies, also Telecom network and it is in the business interest of both sectors to do so. I think a closer collaboration between the two sectors would be useful and on connectivity, you know, the problem is the return on investment because you go to populations spread across a big area and it will cost a lot more to connect them than to connect in an urban area and you don't get the return on investment and that's why industry is not too

keen, that's why we need the Universal Fund and I think
governments could also encourage more investment through
incentives like, you know, tax, too many companies are taxed
too heavily to make a business case. This needs to be more
incentives I believe and, of course, some countries have these
problems that your country has, many other countries have, it
has been a few years since I have -- I had difficulty in
accessing the Internet. So that's quite a few country, your
own country, unfortunately politics comes into this.

    >> I'm sorry, is it a global need to be connected or a way
for development or a goal to be connected?

    >> MALCOLM JOHNSON: There are discussions in Human Rights
arena, which is not inside ITU, we don't get into Human Rights
issues, but generally speaking, yeah. It is a lot of people
that would say it should be a Human Rights to be connected, a
Human Rights for everyone everywhere.

    >> MEI LIN FUNG: Could I jump in?

    >> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Please.

    >> MEI LIN FUNG: So with the Ukraine Russian conflict,
there was a request to ICANN to cut Russia off from the Internet.
That request was refused. It is the right to be connected. I
thought it was a good example of what actually happened to
reiterate what you're saying, that this is a right, this is not
something that should be just used for political purposes.

    Thank you for raising that question.

    >> AHMAD REZA SHARAFAT: Thank you very much. Yes, Madam,
I think that it is indeed regrettable. They deny the general
public in certain locations to benefit from connectivity and
the benefits that come with connectivity.

    I think it is very unfortunate and you hope that we would
witness situations in which such measures and such UCMs would
not be applied against innocent individuals in different
countries.

    Thank you very much.

    With this, we can conclude.

    Let me try to sum up in a short way. Of course, we have
had a number of different issues and subjects that we have to
consider, connectivity, affordability, capacity building,
skills, inclusiveness, gender barriers, how to win with them,
how to elevate them, and I would like to put them altogether
in what I call the ecosystem of the ICT development, we have
to take into account all of these hopefully simultaneously at
the same time to find a proper way forward. Otherwise, in the
way forward we would be coming across other barriers that would
prevent us from moving even further. With this, recognizing
there are no other requests for the floor, I would like to say
a final summary of the session will be provided soon.

Of course, our final session would be next, it is not possible to have a written summary of our session within maybe 20 minutes from now but we will try our best and provide a written summary which will be available on the Internet to those that are interested.

I would like to thank our panelists for their contribution, for the time, for their thoughts, and also I would like to thank you all who participated in this session, whether physically or virtually. The participation is valued to the WSIS Forum and to the ITU for which I would like to thank you wholeheartedly.

With this, this session is closed. Thank you again.