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>> GITANJALI SAH: Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. We are about to start the closing of the High-Level Track of the WSIS Forum 2023. Though we continue with the WSIS Forum high level, the workshops, the country workshops, action line workshops tomorrow. But we are concluding the High-Level Track. We had 11 high level policy sessions. We will be concluding to them now and listening to the summaries. So we would like to request you to please take your seats so that we can begin our session on time.

Pardon? So while we are waiting for our audience to join in, we would like to request you all standing to please take your seats so we can start the session on time.

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is the concluding ceremony of the High-Level Track. And we will be listening to the summaries of the High-Level Track facilitators. We are joined by our Secretary-General, Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin and our chairperson who will also be -- will be presiding over the concluding ceremony. I would like to please invite as many of the digital policy advisor from ICC and she will provide her brief summary on High-Level Policy Session 1, bridging the digital divide. Meni, we would like to invite you to the podium.

>> MENI ANASTASIADOU: Thank you very much and thank you all for joining us and very interesting high level sessions. I had the pleasure in particular to moderate High-Level Policy Session 1 on bridging the digital divides. And the session

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convened a very good representation of panelists, covering a wide range of stakeholder types of region, including Poland, Kenya, Argentina, Colombia, Switzerland and Mexico and U.S. and Sweden for a conversation on current challenges and efforts on bridging the digital divide. The panelists provided insights on the state of play and the progress made under the principle of reaping the advantages and the opportunities offered by information, and communication technologies. So the session showcased the importance of accelerating the digital inclusion as a key contributing factor. One highlighting the multi-layer aspect of addressing digital divide. It also underlined the importance of investing in collective action.

Further more the session highlighted priority areas in [wjj](#) bridging the digital divide, including investment, investing in digital literacy and supporting multi-sectoral initiatives. In the session we also saw direct connection to the WSIS Action Lines on the Sustainable Development Goals. Access to information and knowledge, capacity building, and more in to the connection to the Sustainable Development Goals we saw the need to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all while at the same time revirtualizing the global partnership for sustainable development. We saw a plethora of case examples in promoting equal labor inclusion and training of women in STEM.

And eliminating barriers, deployment for rural, remote and hard to reach areas. Partnerships to innovate health. With a mutual understanding of the role of ICTs and digital technologies in accelerating sustainable development, the panelists aligned on the need for a multi-stakeholder approach in bridging the digital divide. Such efforts will for sure bolster economic growth. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> Thank you very much. Anja, we would like to move on to High-Level Policy session, enabling environment. Ms. Anja moderated the session. Over to you, Anja.

>> ANJA JEANETTE HAGA ENGEN: Thank you very much. ITU Secretary-General, Ms. Chairwoman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I had the pleasure to moderate session 2 entitled enabling environments. This session had good representation of all stakeholder types and regions, including representatives from Somalia, the United States, IEEE, ICC and the Internet Society.

Our action line facilitator was Steven Burr, Deputy Director of the BDT. Session reiterated the vision of an enabling environment, referring to policy legal markets and social considerations that interact at domestic and regional levels.

With a view to create a digital economy that can enhance the role of the ICTs in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

The panel agreed on several policy priorities that need to be addressed in order to create an enabling environment. This includes safety and competence in the use of ICTs, Consumer Protection, privacy, competition and market entry, balanced spectrum ecosystem, connectivity and universal service and access. Energy sustainability and finally an open, safe inclusive and affordable Internet. In terms of identifying the way forward, the panel agreed to further strengthen the multi-stakeholder approach to policy and regulatory development on a national, regional and international levels. This implies adopting a people first approach, which strikes a balance between promoting innovation, and protecting consumer's rights and interests. Promoting competition, and facilitate market entry as markets are still developing. Considering spectrum as a major enabler for the growth of the Digital Economy. Promoting an open and safe and inclusive and affordable Internet. Enhancing digital literacy to ensure an inclusive Information Society. Ensuring that the Digital Economy is fuelled by sustainable power using renewable energy and developing energy storage mechanisms to collect and save energy for current and future use. Again thank you to all who contributed to this session. And Thank you, Chair woman for your excellent leadership. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much. We'd like to move on to High-Level Policy Session 3, building confidence and security in the use of ICTs. Karen Mulberry, senior manager, public affairs IEEE moderated the session. We would like to invite Karen to the podium.

>> KAREN MULBERRY: First I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the ITU, and our Honorable Chairman for allowing me to facilitate this session 3 on building confidence and security in the use of ICTs. I am Karen Mulberry. I had a panel that represented many regions. And many interests and had many activities under way. Overall, security and addressing risks and the impacts of cyber threats was acknowledged as an ongoing challenge. There is a need to protect everyone. And there is also a need to maintain trust, and confidence in digital platforms. Now access to the information is critical as we move in to a Digital Age. As more information services knowledge are online access to that knowledge in a safe environment is important.

Especially in building a confidence and security in ICTs with the WSIS action line.

Now the High-Level Panelists identified that addressing

these issues and challenges of security requires both government policies, strategies and regulation. And a public private partnership to develop approaches to meet growing cybersecurity threats. In addition, the High-Level Panelists identified actions that have being undertaken to establish these collaborative efforts. They're raising awareness. The need for online security. Growing cooperation between countries and between stakeholders.

The High-Level Panelists also emphasized that in the Digital Age security and trust are critical to ensuring online access and exchanging trustworthy information. I'd like to thank all of my panelists, I think we had a great discussion and shared a lot of information and activities that will be useful as we move forward. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Karen. We move on Dr. Alessandro High-Level Policy Session 4, inclusiveness, access to information and knowledge for all. Over to you, Dr. Alessandro Caforio.

>> ALESSANDRO CAFORIO: Thank you. And first of all thank you to the Secretary-General and to the chairperson for letting me have the honor to moderate the session. Session 4 was about the inclusiveness, access to information and knowledge for all in bridging digital divides and access to digital infrastructure is a key factor for inclusive Information Societies.

Digital inclusion encompasses individuals, communities, vulnerable groups being able to have access to use Internet technologies and to be able to participate and benefit from today's growing Information Society.

According to the distinguished panelists, developing the topic during session 4, inclusive digital society must be built about the Foundation of five key elements. First of all infrastructure and connectivity. Geographical coverage is a precondition to universal access to information. Recommendations is to expand network coverage and increase investment and promote community networks. Second point is affordability and accessibility of devices and equipment. Tech related precondition beyond network infrastructure, citizens need access to devices enabling them to access to the Internet. The recommendations in this cases are to encourage manufacturers, develop low cost high quality devices and to establish subsidy programs to help low income individuals purchase devices.

Third point was digital literacy for all, once we have network coverage we need to provide all citizens with the knowledge and skills required to fruitful use of the

technologies. Recommendations in this case are to develop comprehensive digital literacy programs are getting marginalized population and bridging the digital gaps. And to integrate in to school curriculum, adult education programs. Third point is about e-services developed by Governments. Health education and access to public information, further step is the digital transformation enabling accessible usage.

Fifth point was a cross-cutting priority about accessibility. Addressing limited access to information and services for individuals with disabilities, language barriers or low digital literacy. The road ahead vision for a digital society, necessitates a collaborative effort, including Governments, private sector and Civil Society.

Finally a truly inclusive digital society must be people centered, focused on needs and Aspirations. At the core of digital policy we can work collectively towards bridging the digital divide and creating a better future for all in line with the 2030 United Nations agenda. Thank you.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you. We'd like to move on to the managing director of Partner360, Pierre Mirlesse. And he was the High-Level Track facilitator for Session 5, bridging the digital divide.

>> PIERRE MIRLESSE: Thank you. Madam Secretary-General, Madam Chairperson Distinguished Guests, session 5 was about bridging the digital divide. We have had some very strong contribution from representatives from the Republic of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Malaysia. I want to call out Mrs. Melanie for her outstanding presentation. Herzegovina, Justa from Switzerland as well as Intel Corporation. Participants shared insights about their progress towards the WSIS Action Lines and helping meet the United Nations SDGs and bridging the digital divide in their respective countries. It was clear that a lot of progress has been accomplished in the past year. But also a lot to be done. The WSIS process was recognized by all panelists as an essential platform to exchange successful ideas to leverage for the future. Reminded that digital divide refers to unequal distribution of access to digital technologies such as the Internet and computers.

Bridging the digital divide is a complex challenge that requires collective efforts, Civil Society Organizations and individuals as stakeholders come together. We heard best practices being shared around infrastructure development and how governance can invest in the development of their infrastructure, we heard about digital literacy programs that involve Governments and NGOs and private sector organizations, working together. We heard about the need to have affordable

technology where Government can work at providing that policies to that technology more affordable and more accessible to low income communities.

We heard about the need for community outreach involving NGOs and community organizations. As well as the great public/private partnerships. How Government can partner with the stakeholders at large to help bridge that digital divide. Overall, bridging the digital divide was highlighted as the comprehensive approach that involves investment and infrastructure, education and training. Affordable technology and community outreach by working together, Government, private sectors Civil Society Organizations and individuals who help ensure that everyone has access to the benefits of digital technology. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much. Antonio Luque, Professor of Electronic engineering, University of Seville about the High-Level Track facilitator on Session 6.

>> ANTONIO LUQUE: Thank you. I thank you to ITU and to WSIS Forum for the opportunity of being here. So I will report on session 6, which had the participants from Zambia, Armenia, United Kingdom, Lithuania and people center Internet. The session dealt with the opportunity that new Digital Economies present for development through public/private partnerships, research and development and education.

The panelists commented on how Digital Economies and trade can favor integration, communities and how regulations must be enacted to adopt fair access to benefits of digital trade and financing. Different perspectives were shared on this subject. First everyone sees an opportunity in the new Digital Economy. It was mentioned that when devising plannings, informal economy must be taken in to account as it represents a significant share of the larger economy in many countries.

It was also mentioned several times that bridging the digital divide is potential to explore the benefits that digital trade can bring to everyone. Access and availability affordability should be the driving forces of digitalization. Development of the Digital Economy set up priority in many cases.

For example, liberalizing the telecommunication sectors, deploying 5G infrastructure, helping connect the unconnected. Implementing digital identity for all populations. On the other hand, there was also agreement that Digital Economy presents challenges and threats.

For example, actions directed toward fighting Internet scums or child abuse was shared. There was agreement that the digital economy must be inclusive and allow for access to everyone. One

equal to Digital Economy. And several initiatives addressing them are launched. On second, link to safety, harmful content or cybersecurity. In many cases increase education and others collaboration between governments, agencies and civil sector. We can highlight that the near future will see increased confidence and trust in digital businesses, only if we are able to solve the challenge and provide equal access to activity and services. Bridging the digital divide is key for this and opportunities that will open our world here. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you. We'd like to move over to High-Level Policy Session 7, ethical dimensions of information and knowledge societies, and bridging the digital divide. Caterina Berbenni-Rehm, founder and CEO of PROMIS@Service moderated the session. Over to you.

>> CATERINA BERBENNI-REHM: Excellencies, Secretary-General, Madam Chair, gentlemen, ladies, I hope I don't want to repeat what everything everyone has said already because often it is a reputation I try to give the kernel. So we had a multi-stakeholder group from private public organizations and International Associations representing Cambodia, France, Italy, Portugal, Pakistan, South Africa, United Kingdom. The priorities, regulators must have a human centric approach.

Digital connectivity and inclusion is key at all different levels of society and for citizens' access to services and their fundamental rights like health and education. And to enhance new form of relationships between the state and citizens and businesses.

Promote greater competition in the market as well as social and territorial cohesion. To identify digital vulnerability criteria and define a global agenda to support the most vulnerable population, the Global Digital Compact can be an opportunity at the multilateral level and multi-layer level by the way.

One code of ethics for all technology led products and services with focus on the requirement for standards and framework on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence. And this is more the vision, to make the fight against the digital divide more effective, by better understanding and recognizing its multi-dimensional character and aspects, like the design of the digital differences, also discoverability, the access to information in several languages, IPR ownership, cybersecurity to ensure trust and more. We had also some case examples. One is from Egypt, the project sustaining relevant digital inclusive education for young people. And then Portugal had mobile broadband coverage obligation in less densely populated regions

through the establishment of obligations in the renewal of right of use of frequencies and other 5G option process. Another one concerning the international connectivity, oh, the scope of the Atlantic data gateway platform cables also called Cam ring.

Concluding, the need to find a proper balance between humanities and technologies is omnipresent. Social sciences and humanities must establish a tight cooperation in design and co-creation of cyber technologies always keeping humans in the focus. The WSIS can play a key role in this process. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you. Also bringing back the human centric focus. We move on to high policy Session 8, the WSIS Action Lines and the 2030 Agenda which included some interventions on climate change as well. Associate Professor Abdulkarim Oloyede, Department of Telecommunications University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

>> ABDULKARIM OLOYEDE: Thank you very much. Your Excellency, the Chair of WSIS 2023, the ITU Secretary-General, other elected officials of the ITU, sponsors of WSIS 2023, fellow High-Level Track facilitators, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm here to present a summary of the eighth session of the WSIS Action Lines and 2023 agenda/climate change.

The session focused on the WSIS action line, the 2023 agenda and issues around climate change. The session took place at 9 a.m. on Wednesday 15th of March 2023. And the panelists from Tanzania, Romania, Sweden, Estonia, Huawei, QT, international commission on cybersecurity law, and the UN brief.

In terms of vision, the panelists all had a vision that everyone should be connected to the Internet in a sustainable way. This is because we live in a world where the digital transformation is not only a technical issue but a fundamental precondition for participating fully in today's society. In terms of fresh priorities, it was agreed that the meet goals and Action Lines for us to meet the goals and Action Lines we need to work together and build capacity to connect the unconnected. And fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals such as building a better future and by accelerating progress in gender, equality, climate change, education, et cetera.

In terms of emerging trends the need to enact data protection law was emphasized. This is because data protection provides for matters relating to principal data.

It plays a vital role in assuring security of data, hence increasing new confidence, while in the cyberspace. In terms of vision, the mission of the ICT companies is not just to pursue their own green development. But also about using innovative digital technologies to enable emissions reduction in other

industries and to drive sustainable action in the society.

In terms of opportunities it was agreed by the panelists that to tackle climate change, it is a monumental question. And we must agree -- we agreed that all aspects must be considered. However, it was also agreed that ICT are both the ones that will continue to solve climate crisis and at the same time the one that will have significant impact on climate change. So because of this, we need to ensure that we make a difference. And we need to work together using private companies and Government. In terms of the road ahead, it is predicted that more than half of our electricity we generated from renewable energies. Finally it was emphasized that we need -- we want to go first, we should go alone. If you want to go far, we need to go together.

Internet go far, we need to go together. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much. Ms. Evelyne Tauchnitz moderated High-Level Policy Session 9, which included some speakers on climate change.

>> EVELYNE TAUCHNITZ: Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much. This session was concerned with the development and use of ICTs for the benefit of human well-being in areas such as education, health, eGovernments, the management of natural resources, including climate change. We had a good representation of stakeholders from different parts of the world, both from Governments and private sector and Civil Society.

High-Level Panelists agreed on the importance of utilizing ICTs to facilitate sustainable development and to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The panelists emphasized the need on sustainable digital development and here really the emphasis on sustainable. Meaning it should not only benefit digital economics, economies, but also social development.

And green development, which is in alignment with nature.

Most High-Level Panelists also agreed there should be a collaboration between different stakeholders. And also here I want to emphasize the role of youth. Because youth they are like -- they have new ideas that can give fresh priorities, fresh ideas in a creative and entrepreneurial way. I'm going to try to focus by the way on things that were not so much mentioned yet.

And something that was said that ICTs can be used for inclusive development because that is also a basic human right. Just to remind also that SDGs and Human Rights are related do each other. And human-centered development, I would like to emphasize from our discussions ICTs need to be human-centered

and in alignment with nature.

Some emerging trends were discussed, notably an e-government through Mobile Applications. Online education services that were gaining traction, especially since the COVID pandemic. Using ICTs for climate change and increasing energy efficiency and enhancing communication between public service providers and users in health. These are the opportunities. Something that wasn't mentioned was the possibilities to really support small and medium-sized enterprises in their access to digital capital, know how virtual marketplace is for local to global level.

Again e-governments was also seen as a huge opportunity. Because even during crisis, it can allow the Government to provide public services to their citizens.

Okay. At the end, some short key challenges that I can give as a road ahead. I want to mention that there exists different views based on platform Governments, when it came to digital sovereignty and freedom of expression. Key concerns were data privacy and that was embedded in the topic of geopolitical tensions that would require more appropriation and collaboration on an international level.

Also overcoming cultural divisions. Just as a last word, we must -- it was also noted that we must let actions follow words and learn from best practices, especially from the youth in order to have human centric and inclusive Information Societies in alignment with the natural environment because as such, sustainable development is also basic Human Rights that can be achieved through multi-stakeholder collaboration. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much. The next High-Level Policy Session No. 10, bridging digital divides was moderated by Claire Somerville, who is a medical anthropologist, lecturer and Executive Director of the Gender Centre at the Geneva Graduate Institute. We welcome you on the podium.

>> CLAIRE SOMERVILLE: Thank you. Good afternoon. Our panel was bridging digital divides. We were very well balanced panel on axes of gender, geography and organizers. The panel discuss can be summed in three headings. Those are awareness, affordability and access.

Our discussions unpacked five the big digital divides. I'm going to run through them very briefly. Income, the level of Internet use in Low Income Countries remains at 26%. Far below that of a high income countries which is closer to 19%. The urban rural divide, the share of Internet users is almost as twice as high in urban areas at 82% than in rural areas around 40%.

Gender, men use the Internet more than women. The reasons

are multiple and digital gender gaps are intersection and structural and range in causation from the lack of women girls in STEM to gender pay gaps which makes access less affordable. Generations and age, 75% of youth use Internet, used the Internet last year versus 65% of the rest of us but we know of many other cross-cutting reasons why aging is a challenge. Finally, education and skills. In nearly all countries where data is available rates of Internet usage is higher with those with more education.

Each of the country examples provided national context for each of these digital divides, highlighting the very different country situations. Therefore the different impacts of each of these five identified digital divides. And therefore different policy priorities. For example, the median age in Philippines is 24 years old compared to the global median of 31. Filipinos spend 10 hours of Internet and four hours on social media platforms versus two with the rest of the world. With contrast of Lithuania and those that live in rural areas are less likely to benefit from using the Internet.

For example, e-banking, e-commerce, eGovernment. Outlining the importance of regional and global coordination, examples from the Grenadines emphasize ongoing work across networks of neighboring countries. They revise and ratified a new Treaty that sets a framework for ICTs in the subregion. Finally we heard about the intersecting challenges in Malawi, a low income country. Malawi has a GDP of less than \$650 per head. With a population of nearly 20 million and 85% live in rural areas and 65% are youth. Malawi facing intersecting digital divides on income, age and rural/urban split. Context matter.

Key messages that came out of the discussions, multi-stakeholder collaborations that only bring about innovative approaches and solutions but ensure that risk is shared among networks of actors. Thank you.

Furthermore, core infrastructure, sustainable and sustainable energy sources are technical if tech entrepreneurs are to develop a fair and just digital world. I thank you the panelists for their excellent contributions, and vibrant conversation. Thank you.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you. Thank you very much, Claire, for that excellent summary. We'd now like to move on to the last session, the High-Level Policy Session 11, knowledge societies capacity building and e-learning, Liberato Bautista, the President of Conference of Nongovernmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations, in short CONGO moderated this session. Over to you.

>> LIBERATO BAUTISTA: Madam Secretary-General, Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Your Excellencies, it has been

an honor -- now it is moving. It has been an honor to moderate High-Level Policy Session 11 on the theme knowledge societies, capacity building and e-learning. It was a high pressure assignment. To work seamlessly. Thank you very much. My panelists came from Cuba, Guinea, Cyprus, Mauritius and Russian Federation. Thank you to all the panelists. Session 11 focused on knowledge societies and capacity building and e-learning. The basic premise for the session each person should have the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and benefit fully from the Information Society and the knowledge economy. My panelists characterized how literacy and universal primary education are critical factors for building a fully inclusive Information Society. Pay in particular attention to the unique needs of girls and women and building institutional capacity. Panelists call their attention to partnerships between developed and Developing Countries, and economies in transition in research and development technology transfer, manufacturing, and the utilization of IT products and services.

The seven high level Government speakers and two from the UN and one from the industry, touch upon multiple aspects of these above themes. Many speaker emphasize the importance of the positive integration of Developing Countries in to the knowledge economy and opening up digital access to remote and rural areas and to all vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

Since almost one-third of the world's population has yet to have digital access, considerable new efforts were being made to familiarize and facilitate the access to more citizen of ICTs. Capacity building measures in all countries also address this issue. Emphasizing introducing school children and University students to the broadest range of digital technology and appropriate equipment.

Under the heading e-learning, many speakers addressed the necessity for achieving universal connectivity. And the role of Government in providing adequate administrative and financial backing to enterprises and educational institutions at every level. Ladies and Gentlemen, almost all participants commented on the importance of enhancing international cooperation in all aspects of ICT.

The issues addressed by the panel are pregnant with possibilities for digital justice and communication rights. And I urge all of us to collaboratively give birth to these possibilities. Thank you, Chair and Secretary-General.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much. And a round of applause for all of the High-Level Track facilitators.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: They are nominated through the WSIS Forum open consultative process from different stakeholder

groups, technical communities and private sector and the academia. And we go through trainings, several training sessions. So they have done a commendable job and thank you all for keeping on time. We will commence with the certificate ceremony. I would like to request our Secretary-General and chairperson to please come forward and we'll start the ceremony now. For high policy session 1.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Anja, Access Partnership.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Karen from IEEE. Alessandro, University.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Pierre, Partner360 partner. Antonio, University of Peru. Katrina. Abdulkarim, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

Evelyne, University of Lucerne.

Claire, Geneva graduate.

And Liberato in Congo.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much. And thank you also to the bell keepers who kept us on time. Now I would like to invite Secretary-General to the lectern.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN: Thank you. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. I want to start by thanking our incredible High-Level Track facilitators. Thank you for the tremendous efforts you made and for your incredible summaries. Thank you. When I opened the WSIS Forum yesterday, I mentioned that this incredible WSIS community was an heir to a long and proud tradition of fostering inclusive dialogue amongst different stakeholders and I think it is fair to say you proved that again in these 11 very important and constructive policy sessions.

You looked discuss me, at the challenge of bridging the digital divide from very diverse angles. But I think what came through at least for me was a sort of common sense of urgency. I could feel that in all of your presentations. A sense of urgency and a sense of community and it is time for action. If there was one word that encapsulates the discussions, it would be complexity. And I don't mean that in the negative sense. Complexity, since participants addressed issues as diverse and complex as infrastructure development, investment, digital skills, digital services, accessibility, climate, the monumental challenge as one of you said, affordability, awareness and of course public/private partnerships.

Without to try to capture or summarize the richness of what you have just presented I do see some actionable priorities that

you have put forward in these different sessions. I would say the first is that ability to enable information exchange. The participants over these 11 sessions have shared some incredible experiences and case studies from their own countries and organizations.

I think from the Lithuania government experience of partnering to tackle online child abuse to Estonians experience on digital signatures to Zambia's experience in building confidence in e-government services to India's rolling out of an authentication tool for the entire population that has managed to open some 485 million bank accounts, wow. And, of course, the list goes on, impressive. I think another priority that came through is trying to find that optimal balance between humanity and technology. Caterina, you mentioned that, I think well. And I also firmly believe that we cannot separate people from technology. So I was really pleased to hear in many of your summaries that we do have to put humans. We have to put people at the center and, of course, this is something that the first phase of the WSIS back in 2003 underscored. As one session put it, we will continue to deal with questions of ethics. And bias the technology can reinforce. And I think that's why we do need to bring diverse perspectives, to prompt the evolution of technology.

You also highlighted the need to promote collective action and I think Pierre, you certainly focused on that. So, you know, let's go together as Abdul said we got to go together. Discussions aligned with mechanisms like the proposed global compact and it is important to build an open, a free inclusive and secure digital future for all.

The other I think important take-away was that continued mention of trust and confidence and we need I think to do -- to do much more. We need to create that safe online environment in terms of systems, technology, skills, because getting this right is going to be key to unlocking digital opportunity for billions.

You also stressed how we need to make digital transformation sustainable, we need to make it green. It was good to hear participants stress how we can actually use innovative digital technologies to enable emission reduction in other industries that can help to drive sustainability across our societies.

And finally, I think my big take-away from these sessions is how important collaboration is. Collaboration across sectors and collaboration across silos as well. From Governments to private sector, Civil Society, NGOs and individuals. The clear messages that when it comes to bridging digital divides, there is no one size fits all and no one entity can do it alone. Digital divides need to be tackled comprehensively and also

wholistically with solutions that work in different parts of the world and with different entities. What makes this WSIS process so valuable is that need for collective action, that need for diverse opinions, that need to bring different stakeholders together. And I think that's really how we're going to get it done. I can't wait to work further with all of you as we look to WSIS+20 which is just right around the corner and, of course, to create a better digital future that's trusted, open, affordable and all the other great things that you have mentioned.

So thank you again. And Ladies and Gentlemen, I would now like to recognize our amazing and extremely competent Chair, Chairwoman. And I have the great pleasure and privilege to award her with a special certificate. Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in applauding the Minister of Slovenia, Dr. Emilija Stojmenova for all of her amazing work. Please.

(Applause.)

>> DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN: Ladies and Gentlemen, I will hand the floor to our Chair to close us out. And perhaps a little reminder, the fun doesn't stop here. There will be a yoga session just outside. So I hope you will join us for a moment of relaxation. But before that, of course, please Ladies and Gentlemen, let's hear from our Chair. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> CHAIR: Dear Secretary-General, dear colleagues, I will not take a lot of time because I know that you are waiting for the yoga session. We are coming to the closing of the high level sessions. And the topics that we have discussed during the last two days addressed very well the current challenges, just to name a few of them bridging digital divide, enabling environment for digital technologies, inclusiveness and access to knowledge for all, Digital Economy and trade, ethical dimensions of ICT, climate change, knowledge societies and, of course, capacity building.

It is my pleasure to hear that you have contributed many interesting ideas and insights at different panels. I'm happy that I participated at some of them. You were concrete in presenting good practices and bold in providing ground break have breaking solutions for the demanding challenges that we are all facing. I would like to point out three main take-aways. First one is access, availability and affordability should be the driving force of the digital transformation. And then the next one, digital education and digital skills play a crucial role in the adoption of digital technologies. They not only enable population to use the ICT for good but also prevent harm and decrease risks. And lastly, trust in digital is of key importance. We can only reach it by developing the human

centric and Human Rights Based Approach to digital technologies with full inclusion of everyone, regardless of their gender, age, location, and race. The road ahead vision for an inclusive digital society, demands a concentrated and collaborative effort from all stakeholders, including governments, private and public sector researchers, academia and, of course, the Civil Society.

Challenges that stand before us are numerous. Lack of access to high speed Internet, particularly in rural and remote areas. Inadequate investment in the ICT infrastructure development. And then limited availability of affordable devices. Lack of digital literacy among marginalized populations such as older adults, adults, women, and those in low income communities. And lastly limited access and low adoption of e-services due to inadequate infrastructure, connectivity, or digital literacy.

For overcoming these barriers we need to expand coverage and increase investment in ICT infrastructure. In particular, through public/private partnerships. To implement Universal Service Funds to ensure connectivity, in underserved areas. To encourage manufacturers to develop low cost and high quality devices. To develop comprehensive digital literacy programs, marginalized populations and bridging the digital gaps. Through women in STEM education, initiatives for including silver age population and so on. To continue to integrate digital literacy in to school curricula. To invest in the development and promotion of user friendly e-services for health education and, of course, public administration.

Accelerate digital transformation also in the public sector to improve service delivery and to consider spectrum as a major enabler of the growth of the digital economy, especially with the promotion of 5G and next generation services. Dear participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, WSIS Forum 2023 bringing together over 1400 participants for more than 150 countries has been an amazing opportunity to exchange numerous good practices from all around the world. With some of them yesterday, I awarded with the WSIS awards, the Secretary-General also mentioned several of them. Let me allow to share the one that I was mostly impressed. I will start with the example of Somalia. And then continue with Georgia building user confidence. Zimbabwe showed us how they are expanding telecommunications infrastructure across the country. India was already mentioned and Lithuania as well. And accessibility of Zambia's Government services online. No matter the development, we are all facing numerous remaining challenges. Unequal access to digital services, gender age, risk of to safety online, especially for the vulnerable groups. Cybersecurity and cybercrime, threats must be taken most seriously and international cooperation is

needed to work on a common framework in this regard.

You can see that our to-do list is long. But international cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement are the key. Therefore, processes such as WSIS are an immense contribution. They bring us together to meet, discuss and build meaningful partnerships. And there are enormous help on our way to achieving Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to thank you all for your active participation and as the Secretary-General mentioned, I wish all of us success in our future activities. We all may be different fish. But we swim together in this.

And I would like to conclude with another female quote. A female leader quote by Melinda Gates, who said if we want to include everyone we have to help everyone develop their talents and use their gifts for the good of the community. That's what inclusion means. Everyone contributes. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you, chairperson. Thank you for leading us all throughout this High-Level Track. Thank you Secretary-General. And we now would like to close the session and would like to invite you for the yoga and mindfulness session. It is right next to the inspire stage when you go around. Look forward to relax and to regain our calm after a very tiring day. Thank you so much for joining us. And --

(Applause.)

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