

## **WSIS Leaders TalkX**

### **Forging Partnerships: Shaping the “Digital for Development” Landscape**

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#### **Remarks**

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**Mario Maniewicz,  
Director, Radiocommunication Bureau**

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It is an honor to address you today on a topic that holds immense potential for transforming our world: the intersection of digital technology and development.

We stand at the threshold of unprecedented technological advancement, we have a unique opportunity to leverage digital innovations to drive sustainable development, enhance inclusivity, and improve the quality of life for millions around the globe.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, digital technologies have transformed the way we live, work, do business and communicate. They have broken down barriers, connected people across continents, and enhanced access to information.

However, this revolution has not been evenly distributed. There are still vast areas of the world where digital infrastructure is lacking, where connectivity is a luxury, and where the benefits of digital technology remain out of reach.

The concept of "Digital for Development" is about harnessing the power of digital technology to address development challenges, reduce inequalities, and promote sustainable growth.

But to achieve this, we cannot work in silos. We need workable, stronger and inclusive partnerships that bring together governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations.

Governments are pivotal in creating an enabling environment for digital development. They can enact policies that promote digital literacy, invest in infrastructure, and ensure that regulatory frameworks support innovation while protecting citizens' rights. However, these efforts alone are not sufficient.

Tech companies, telecommunications firms, and startups, bring innovation, expertise, and resources. They can develop and deploy technologies that address specific development needs, from digital health solutions to online education platforms. By partnering with governments and other stakeholders, the private sector can help scale these solutions and make them accessible to those who need them most.

Civil society organizations are equally important. Their involvement is essential to ensure that digital development is inclusive and equitable.

International organizations and development agencies also play a critical role in this ecosystem. They can facilitate knowledge exchange, provide technical assistance, and mobilize funding for digital development initiatives. Their global reach and expertise can help scale successful projects and replicate best practices across different regions.

Just a few months ago we successfully concluded the 2023 World Radiocommunication Conference, which allocated new spectrum resources in light of recent technological innovations in order to deepen global connectivity, increase access to and equitable use of space-based radio resources, and enhance safety at sea, in the air, and on land.

The regulatory framework agreed to at the conference, ensures the continued coexistence of different radiocommunication services while maintaining the stability required to attract investments and enabling the continued growth of telecommunications and ICTs.

Digital technologies have opened the doors to new applications that are spurring greater interest in, and demand for, the world's limited spectrum and orbital resources. This growing demand sometimes requires updates to the regulatory framework.

Over the years, the ITU Radio Regulations have continuously enabled technological developments to increase the efficient use and access to radio frequency. Modifications to the international treaty have addressed the spectrum requirements of both new and existing services; ensured the timely availability of spectrum and corresponding regulatory provisions; and promoted the benefits of globally harmonized frequency bands.

Our member states have now embarked on the implementation of the changes that the WRC-23 brought to the Radio Regulations by way of revising their national regulations and, as necessary, their licensing requirements.

However, building effective partnerships is not without challenges. It requires mutual trust, shared goals, and a willingness to collaborate.

All our efforts need to be focused on bridging the digital divide and to leaving no one behind. We must also address issues related to data privacy, cybersecurity, and ethical use of technology.

In conclusion, the "Digital for Development" landscape offers immense opportunities, but we can only realize its full potential through strong, collaborative partnerships.

ICTs should be regarded as tools and not as an end in themselves. Under favourable conditions, these technologies can be a powerful instrument, increasing productivity, generating economic growth, job creation and employability, and improving the quality of life of all. They can promote dialogue among people, nations and civilizations.

By working together, we can harness the power of technology to drive sustainable development, improve lives, and create a more equitable world.

Let us commit to forging these partnerships and shaping a brighter future for all.

Thank you.