



GHANA STATEMENT

**STATEMENT BY HON. URSULA OWUSU-EKUFUL,
MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITALISATION, DELIVERED TO THE 2022
PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE (PP-22) OF THE INTERNATIONAL
TELECOMMUNICATION UNION, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA**

Honourable Chairperson,
The Secretary-General of the ITU,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues and Delegates.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Ghana, I extend our sincere appreciation to the Government of Romania for hosting the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-2022) and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to my delegation and I, since our arrival in the beautiful city of Bucharest.

Hon. Chairperson, please accept our heartfelt congratulations on your election. As we proceed to set the Union's General Policy direction, adopt the 4-year strategic and financial plans, elect the senior management team of the Union and Member States of the Council, we trust in your capabilities to steer this conference to a successful end.

Chairperson, Secretary General, Excellencies, Ghana is fully committed to the strategic direction set by the ITU to ensure the universal connectivity that will propel the needed global digital transformation. Closing the digital divide to facilitate equitable connectivity, which is vital to support the economic transformation of Ghana, is our primary objective. We are of the opinion that we can transform Covid19 from a global crisis to an opportunity through digital technology.

In this respect, the Government of Ghana, led by His Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, Co-Chair of the Group of Eminent Advocates for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and also a firm believer in the power of digital technology to drive socio-economic development, is actively implementing our digital Ghana agenda. This is intended to position Ghana as the digital gateway to the continent. Indeed, the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with the Secretariat headquartered in Ghana is a pointer to the African Continent-wide marketing strategy powered by digitalisation. We are therefore extending our digital infrastructure to our borders to enable seamless connection to our neighbours.

Our Government has also introduced initiatives to narrow the digital divide and empower citizens to embrace the use of ICT. We are implementing a Rural Telephony project to

connect over 3 million people. These previously unconnected people now have equal access to the innovations introduced by the Government in Ghana's digital transformation journey. They include:

- a) Mobile money interoperability which has brought over 15 million previously unbanked persons onto the financial digital platform;
- b) The National Identity Card as a single purpose e ID for all digital transactions to prevent identity theft and cyber fraud.
- c) Digital skills development offered through a nationwide network of Digital Transformation Centres to benefit over 20,000 Women Entrepreneurs, Master Trainers, Youth and Children in Coding Clubs over the past 12 months.
- d) Focused interventions to reduce the gender digital divide and create opportunities for the youth through the Girls in ICT program and nurturing of new businesses at Digital Incubation Centres.

To ensure a secure and resilient cyberspace for sustained digital transformation, utilising ITU guidelines, Ghana is actively promoting cybersecurity not only for our benefit but for the sub-region as a whole. Ghana's ranking on the 2021 ITU Global Cybersecurity Index improved to 86.69%, up from 32.6% in 2017. We seek partnerships and international cooperation to do even better for our entire sub-region.

Chairperson, Ghana, remains an active member of the ITU, fully committed to the work of the ITU Council, and we will continue to align our goals with the ITU strategic plan, which will be adopted here in Bucharest.

Ghana considers the collaborative platforms initiated by the ITU and the various regional and global partnerships essential to the growth of not only the Africa Region but all Member States for our collective benefit. To this end, Ghana will continue to serve the ITU community, and as we seek reelection to the Council, we are counting on your vote and support to retain Ghana as a Council member to continue serving you diligently.

I wish this ITU Plenipotentiary Conference every success. Thank you.