



Ministerial Forum to Commemorate the African Telecom/ICT Day 2021 Under the Theme: “Digital Skills Development for Africa’s Digital Transformation”

7th December 2021 – 11:00 AM- 12:30 PM (Virtual)

Background

Africa needs to catch up with the rest of the world in the uptake of 4IR technologies such as AI, Big Data, IoT, Augmented Reality and Robotics that are globally revolutionizing all economic sectors and increasing efficiency, productivity, and value. The transformative nature of the digital economy could greatly benefit the African agricultural, financial, health, mining, tourism, and transportation sector, just to mention a few. Additionally, emerging technologies offer African countries the opportunity to skill the youthful populations and empower them to earn from the existing jobs or projected opportunities created by the nascent inventions and applications in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) globally.

While desirous of competing among other regions to harness emerging opportunities, the African region is challenged by a lack of attendant skills, necessary infrastructure, and supportive policies and strategies.

Africa needs e-skills as a core set of skills to equip and prepare her citizens for 4IR and other emerging technologies. Lack of these skills will be a barrier to growth, employment, and social inclusion in Africa.

Cognizant of this challenge, ATU and its members have prioritized e-skills development as a strategic imperative for the region's growth as incorporated in Pillar 4 of the current Strategic Plan 2019-2022. The Strategic Plan commits ATU and its membership to build adequate human resources in the telecommunications/ICT sector and commits ATU to develop a model framework for e-skilling, including for persons with disabilities and special needs.

In line with its strategic plan, ATU has developed the e-skills framework. This framework will guide the ATU Member States in developing and promulgating their country-specific e-skilling programmes. The framework seeks to empower Africa to respond to and leverage its unique assets, such as its youthful population, to harness the power of emerging technologies such as 4IR.

Currently, among the primary concern for Africa as a region is how to improve and expand entrepreneurship and job opportunities in the knowledge and traditional

sectors and, importantly, leverage digital technologies to empower the growing number of youths enabling them to embrace the emerging digital economy.

This e-skilling model framework suggests policies and strategies that will enable nations to include e-skills in their school curriculum while considering persons with disabilities and special needs. It aims at assisting ATU Member States and stakeholders in understanding and addressing the underlying trends, gaps, and projections that may contribute to the development and implementation of overarching national e-skilling initiatives and therefore realize the digital economy. This strategy document outlines how African countries can plan and bridge the gap between the digital skills needed and the open economic opportunities, both locally and globally. The framework demonstrates a number of strengths that countries may borrow from and shortcomings that countries need to address in order to attain the critical mass and quality digital skills necessary to sustain a vibrant local digital economy with productive tentacles in the region.

ATU Member States can apply the key components of the framework in their national strategies to align and harmonize their digital transformation initiatives with regional, continental, and global targets and objectives.

As a Union, ATU is confident that its Member States will be inspired by the e-skills framework to take the necessary measures and embrace massive e-skills development as a gateway to fulfilling the potential and the promise of Africa's vibrant digital future.

Against this backdrop, ATU calls upon members to dedicate 7th December 2021, a day used to commemorate the establishment of the African Telecommunications Union, in order to reflect on the e-skills development in the context of the e-skills framework. This will enable the membership and stakeholders to share experiences with a view of building a regional movement committed to developing e-skills in readiness for the 4IR under the theme, "e-skills Development for Africa's Digital Transformation".

Main Event

ATU intends to commemorate this day by organizing a one-and-a-half-hour Roundtable Ministerial Forum where ATU Member States will discuss and showcase the e-skills development in their respective countries/regions through the forum.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Forum Moderator: ATU Secretary General

Time period	Topic	Speakers
Opening session		
11:00 – 11:10	Welcome Remarks	ATU – SG Mr. John OMO
11:10 – 11:15	Photo session	
11:15 – 11:30	Keynote address on retooling the workforce for the emerging social and commercial enterprises in Africa.	The Hon. Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Innovation and Youth Affairs, Kenya (TBC)
11:30 – 11:40	Showcasing the value addition of Digital Skills Development on efficiency of emerging social and commercial enterprises in Africa	Speakers: The Hon. Minister Ministry of ICT, Senegal (TBC)
11:40- 11:50	Showcasing the value addition of Digital Skills Development on sufficiency of emerging social and commercial enterprises in Africa	The Hon. Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies South Africa (TBC)
12:00- 12:10	Have the virtual resources contributed to the production efficiency and sufficiency of consumer goods and services while remaining friendly to the environment?	The Hon. Minister Ministry of ICT, Tunisia/Morocco (TBC)
12:10 – 12:20	The youth and young people form the greatest segment of digital demographic in Africa, but they too also form the largest statistic of unemployment. Where is the digital key to unlock Africa’s transformation gridlocks?	The Hon. Minister Ministry of ICT, Tchad/Equatorial Guinea (TBC)
12:20 – 12:25	Discussions, Q&A	
12:25 - 12:30	Summary and Closing Remarks	ATU SG, Mr. John OMO

- **TBC- To be confirmed**