

## SG Speech at the Opening of Mozambique's fifth National Communications Conference

*His Excellency Daniel Francisco Chapo, President of the Republic of Mozambique*

*ITU Secretary General, M. Doreen Bogdan-Martin,*

*Hon. Américo Muchanga - Minister of Communications and Digital Transformation / and  
Hon Ministers here present*

*Mayor of Municipality of Maputo City Mr. Razaque Manhique,*

*Chairperson of the Board of Directors of INCM, Ms. Helena Fernandes,*

*CTO Secretary General Bernadette Lewis*

*Distinguished Participants, Ladies and gentlemen,*

I'm honoured to join you, on behalf of the African Telecommunications Union, for this fifth National Communications Conference convened by INCM. I thank the Government and people of Mozambique for the warmth extended to us, and commend INCM for bringing the country together around questions at the centre of national, regional and international ICT-development discourse.

Not every sectoral conference secures the attention of the Head of State. I'm therefore very pleased that your Excellency the President is part of this Conference. This, indeed, is a reflection of the importance Mozambique places on the value of ICT to transform this beautiful country. Leadership at the highest level is important in any transformative process. The decisions we make will need implementation and it becomes a lot easier to do so with a leadership at the highest level believing in the transformative power of ICTs.

That makes today an opportunity to place before His Excellency the issues that still stand between the promise of communications and its full impact on citizens. Rural connectivity, affordability, emergency readiness and resilient infrastructure are questions of national coordination, public investment, institutional alignment and sustained political will.

Fortunately for us, the theme, "Communications as a Pillar of Digital Transformation", calls us to act on those issues. It tasks every institution represented here to confront whether networks reach the people, whether the people can afford and use what reaches them, and whether those systems will stand when communities need them most.

At the regional level, when we insist on strategic thinking for Africa's digital future, we have in mind the progress taking place in Mozambique. Your National Digital Transformation Strategy under the Ministry of Communications and Digital Transformation is the kind of process we are keen to see, because technology must be tied to institutions and the lived realities of citizens.

Africa has waited long enough, and today more than ever, we cannot afford to mistake coverage for inclusion. A map may show that a signal exists, yet a household may still be unable to afford a device, buy data, trust a platform, understand a service, or find content that improves daily life.

ITU's 2025 assessment shows that almost three quarters of the world's population are online, yet 2.2 billion people remain offline. That is a warning that the last mile is often the hardest, the most expensive and the most politically important.

In 2025, mobile technologies and services generated 240 billion USD in economic value in Africa, equal to 7.8% of regional GDP. They supported about 13 million jobs and contributed

45 billion USD in public revenues. Sub-Saharan Africa also accounted for 1.2 billion registered mobile money accounts and 1.4 trillion USD in transaction value, showing how quickly communications can facilitate daily inclusion when the right systems reach citizens.

For many households, the mobile phone is already a bank branch, a service desk, a classroom, a market stall and a line of protection. That is why the issues before this Conference are not ordinary sector concerns. They determine how far public services can reach, how safely citizens can transact, how quickly information can move, and how strongly communities can remain connected to opportunity.

The same applies to resilience. Communications systems must support the economy on normal days, and support the country on difficult days. A network that connects people only when conditions are favourable is not yet the kind of infrastructure that digital transformation requires.

Your Excellency, this is why the sector needs the attention of the Presidency, as some barriers cannot be solved within the sector alone. When a cyclone hits Mozambique, national emergency authorities must share data and coordinate their efforts. ICT authorities may need operators to use cell broadcasting for early warnings. Defence, Police and emergency systems may need pin-point locational data to direct services. International emergency organisations may need rapid Customs and Immigration clearance for personnel and equipment. These arrangements require proactive data-sharing protocols between agencies, and although ICT can coordinate them, the champion must sit at a higher level.

Mozambique has already taken an important step by bringing these issues into one national conversation. The task now is to make sure that this conversation quickly becomes decisions, with a clear commitment to implement them.

At the African Telecommunications Union, we see Mozambique's effort as part of a wider African responsibility. We stand with you in this work, and with all partners who believe in digital transformation.

May this fifth National Communications Conference add strength to Mozambique's own digital journey, and through it, to Africa's wider pursuit of connected, inclusive and resilient development.

Thank you.