

**INTERVENTION BY ANGELLAH JASMINE MBELWA KAIRUKI- THE MINISTER OF
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC
OF TANZANIA WTPF-26 — Bridging Digital Divides at Nassau, The Bahamas — 2nd
September, 2026**

Thematic Dialogue 1: Bridging Digital Divides

**Honourable Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

The United Republic of Tanzania thanks the International Telecommunication Union, and the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, for convening this Forum.

ITU's Facts and Figures 2025 tells us that 2.2 billion people remain offline. In low-income countries, 23 per cent of people use the Internet.

In high-income countries, 94 per cent. And the global gender parity score has not improved since 2019.

That is not a connectivity gap. It is an opportunity gap.

For the United Republic of Tanzania, meaningful connectivity requires three things: coverage, capability and confidence.

An affordable connection. The skills to use it. And the trust to participate safely.

This is anchored in Tanzania Development Vision 2050, and in our Digital Economy Strategic Framework 2024–2034.

We are translating ambition into action: Across the United Republic — Mainland and Zanzibar - we have completed 758 4G towers, reaching more than 1,400 villages and 8.5 million people who previously had no meaningful service at all. Through TCRA, we have established 800 Digital Clubs. In the coming year, we will add public Wi-Fi at 100 locations, and computer laboratories in 250 public schools, with tailored support for learners with disabilities.

But towers alone do not close the divide.

Coverage without affordability is not inclusion.

Access without skills is not empowerment.

And innovation without trust will not endure.

The United Republic of Tanzania therefore welcomes the action-oriented direction of Draft Opinion [1], and proposes three priorities -

First, on coverage: Combine universal service funds, infrastructure sharing and innovative finance to extend resilient networks, and to bring devices and data within genuine reach. Affordability must be measured, not assumed.

Second, on capability: Make schools and community access points the anchors of inclusion, scaling digital and AI skills for women and girls, for youth, for older persons, and for persons with disabilities. Half the world's schools remain offline. Let us set a date by which that ends.

Third, on confidence: Build secure, inclusive and interoperable digital public infrastructure — with data protection and online safety designed in from the start — and ensure that developing countries help shape the AI future, rather than merely consume it.

Honourable Chair, The United Republic of Tanzania comes to this Forum with an offer, not only an ask.

We are ready to share our Digital Clubs model as a replicable case for this Opinion, and to work with ITU and partners on regional digital and AI skills capacity serving East and Southern Africa.

Success will be measured not by towers built, but by lives transformed: the girl who learns to code; the farmer who reaches a market; the older person who reaches a clinic; the young entrepreneur who creates a job.

Our purpose is not connection. It is opportunity, dignity and agency for every person.

Let us make meaningful connectivity a universal gateway to development — not a privilege determined by geography, gender, age or income.

Thank you.