

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HON. SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE, MINISTER FOR
COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (MoCDTI), AT
THE 2025 WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY
(WTISD) – 19TH MAY 2025**

United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr. Charles Abanni,

Representative of the ITU Secretary General,

Ag. Director General of the NCA,

Ministries and Chief Executives of Agencies present,

Chief Executives and Representatives of Service Providers/Industry Players present,

Management and Staff of NCA,

Distinguished Speakers,

Our friends from the Media,

Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocol duly observed,

Good morning.

It is a great honour to welcome you to this year's celebration of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, a day that reminds us of our shared responsibility to ensure that digital transformation delivers benefits to everyone, everywhere. I begin by expressing my gratitude to each one of you for being here. Your presence affirms the importance of today's theme and the urgency with which we must act.

The theme for this year, "Gender Equality in Digital Transformation," resonates strongly with Sustainable Development Goal 5, which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It is a timely reminder that the digital

revolution must be inclusive. The digital age should not be defined solely by speed or access; it must also be about inclusion, empowerment, and equity.

We must acknowledge that digital transformation is not gender-neutral. That is precisely why we are gathered here, not merely to celebrate progress, but to challenge the status quo and catalyse meaningful change.

Just three weeks ago, I reiterated my Ministry's unwavering commitment to the Girls-in-ICT Programme, a flagship initiative aimed at bridging the gender digital divide by equipping girls with skills in STEM. This initiative is not charity; it is strategy. A digital economy that excludes women is one that limits its own potential. I urge all stakeholders, public and private alike to invest deliberately in the futures of our girls. And to the agencies under my Ministry, let me be candid: when you are presented with equally qualified candidates, choose the woman who shows promise. Let us move beyond rhetoric and take concrete steps to empower women through action.

Let us take a hard look at the facts. Globally, 62 percent of men are online, compared to just 57 percent of women. In Least Developed Countries, only 30 percent of women have internet access, versus 43 percent of men. Women are 7 percent less likely than men to own a mobile phone. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the gender gap in mobile internet use is a staggering 32 percent. Even in more advanced economies, women account for only 20 percent of ICT professionals. And it's not just about access, safety is a growing concern. One in three women globally has experienced online violence. This invisible wall silences voices, limits participation, and hampers innovation.

These figures are not just statistics, they are manifestations of systemic inequality that demand targeted policy, focused investment, and collective resolve.

So, what must we do? We need to take deliberate steps to dismantle the barriers that prevent women and girls from fully participating in the digital world. I propose we concentrate our efforts on three critical areas.

First, digital education and mentorship. We must multiply opportunities such as today's workshop, platforms where women lead, learn, and lift each other. We must introduce girls to technology early and often mentor them consistently and invest in their success. This is how we build a pipeline of confident, capable women in tech.

Second, infrastructure and access. Skills mean little without tools. We must expand infrastructure, particularly in underserved areas, to ensure that access is not a privilege, but a right. We must build ICT centres, equip them with adequate resources, and make digital spaces safe and inclusive for all.

Third, leadership and policy. Representation matters. Women must be more than participants in the digital economy; they must be leaders. We will ensure that women are not only present in decision-making rooms but that they actively shape policy and direct the course of our digital future.

The Government of Ghana is actively building the groundwork for a more inclusive digital future. At the heart of this effort is the One Million Coders Programme, our flagship initiative aimed at equipping young Ghanaians with essential digital skills to thrive and lead in the 21st-century economy. A key focus of the programme is the intentional inclusion of girls and women. The ongoing pilot in Accra, Kumasi, Sunyani, and Bolgatanga proudly reflects this commitment, achieving a 50/50 gender balance. As the President aptly stated at the programme's launch, "we are setting a standard and inclusivity will no longer be a footnote; it will be the foundation."

Our broadband expansion efforts are bringing high-speed internet to underserved regions, levelling the playing field for all.

The National Information Highway, powered by 5G and fibre optics, will soon connect communities, schools, and businesses across the country. Additionally, we are in the final stages of developing a National Digital Policy that will guide the ethical and inclusive deployment of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. Our approach to cybersecurity includes not only regulatory enhancement but also capacity building, ensuring that our citizens, especially women can navigate digital spaces safely.

I am particularly pleased that today's celebration features an all-women workshop spearheaded by the NCA. This is not symbolic, but it is strategic. I expect the session to produce actionable outcomes. I look forward to personally reviewing the report from this workshop, and I assure you that its insights will inform our policy direction. I anticipate the report will focus on mentorship strategies, skill-building pathways, and the creation of safe spaces for sharing experiences.

Ladies and gentlemen, the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day is a global reminder that ICTs are not merely tools, they are gateways to opportunity. But those doors must open equally for everyone. If we are serious about building a digitally empowered nation, then we must be equally serious about gender equality in digital spaces. The cost of inaction is not borne by women alone, it is a loss for all of us. Every girl excluded from technology is a potential innovator, engineer, or leader the world will never know.

I urge each of you to join us in building a future where digital transformation uplift all, not just a select few. Let us work together to reduce the gender gap now, with a firm resolve to eliminate it entirely in the near future.

Thank you for your time, your presence, and most importantly your commitment to action.

Thank you.