South Africa

Candidate for ITU Council
Region D: Africa

South Africa

Inspiring new ways

Foreword by Ms Khumbudzo Ntshavheni Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies

It is my privilege to present the candidature of the Republic of South Africa for re-election to the ITU Council in the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference from the 26th of September to the 14th of October 2022 in Bucharest, Romania. South Africa subscribes to the mission of the ITU to connect the world. We are therefore working tirelessly to ensure that South Africa, Africa, and the rest of the developing world take our rightful place in an inclusive digital economy.

As a country arising from a painful past of segregation and inequality, we are committed to bridging the digital divide wherever it manifests itself. We have internal programmes to bridge the urban-rural digital divide at home and a firm vision to bridge the digital divide between the developing and developed economies. South Africa looks forward to engaging with all Member States during the Plenipotentiary Conference as we seek to shape the future of our Union.

Principles underpinning South Africa's candidature

Our candidature for re-election to the ITU Council has been endorsed by the African Union. South Africa intends to advocate the following principles during the 2023-2026 cycle:

An inclusive ITU championing issues of development as well as driving broadband connectivity for all through:

o Access to radio frequency spectrum on a principle of fairness and efficiency,

o Equitable and efficient use of satellite-orbital resources by all,

o Extensive fibre networks for fast and safe data traffic.

A more accessible standardization environment that is responsive to the technology needs of new entrants and small market players from developing countries,

The principles of interoperability, technology neutrality and interconnectivity of ICT products and infrastructure.

The use of ICTs to achieve sustainable development goals and minimise the impact of climate change.

South Africa

A welcoming home to the ITU Community

South Africa has hosted the following ITU events since its re-admission into the international community in 1994:

World Telecommunications Standardisation Assembly 2008 (WTSA-08), Johannesburg, South Africa

2011

Kaleidoscope 2011- "The fully networked human? - Innovations for future networks and services", Cape Town, South Africa, 12-14 December 2011

ITU-R Joint Task Group 4-5-6-7, East London, South Africa

2018

ITU Telecom World 2018 took place from 10-13 September in Durban, South Africa, on the theme of "Innovation for smarter digital development"

ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2019 for African Region (RRS-19-Africa) - Johannesburg, South Africa

2008

22-31 July 2013
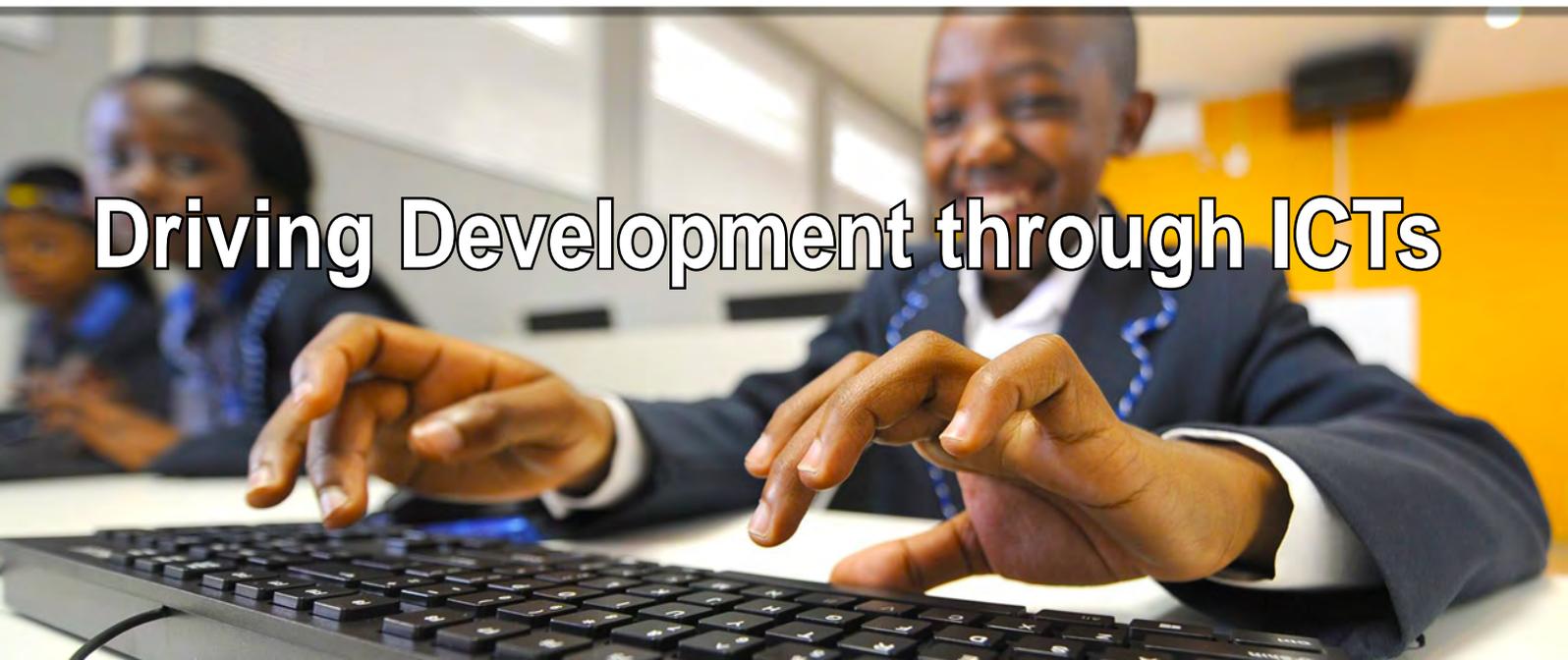
13-17 May 2019

Skills

To expand and diversify digital skills and training opportunities, South Africa developed a National Digital and Future skills strategy. We have also prioritised film and television production, interactive media, animation, graphic design, and content production, to ensure the rapidly emerging digital world is a platform for local content production and creativity. South Africa is building capacity to leverage advances in technology.

AI and Emerging Tech

In 2021 South Africa led the development of the Artificial Intelligence Blueprint for Africa through the Smart Africa Alliance. Later this year, South Africa will launch an Artificial Intelligence Hub in partnership with academic institutions and ICT industry players to harness the economic and social benefits of AI. South Africa chaired and led the development of the African Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Strategy for ATU.

5G

South Africa has a strong mobile penetration and internet coverage and has started rolling out 5-G technologies.

Driving Development through ICTs

GovTech

South Africa has annually held the Govtech conference and exhibition since 1999 which is a premier platform for government and the private sector to share expertise on the power of technology to accelerate public service delivery and sustainable development. The 2022 edition of the Summit will bring together technology leaders from government and business from across the African continent.

High-Demand Spectrum

In March 2022, South Africa successfully concluded the auction of high-demand spectrum. This has gone a long way towards lowering the costs to communicate, improving network quality, fostering competition, and expanding robust networks into the rural areas. In the process we raised about a US$1 billion for the national fiscus.

Broadband Connectivity

South Africa's broadband connectivity programme will ensure that all South Africans have access to the internet by 2024. Mobile operators will spend in excess of US$1.3 billion in social obligations to connect all public schools, health facilities, public libraries, government centres and traditional authorities by June 2025. The South African government will spend in excess of US$161 million in the next 36 months to connect over 33 000 community Wi-Fi hotspots benefiting more than 5,8 million households with access to mobile data.

Lowering the Cost to Communicate

In a quest to further drive down the cost to communicate, South Africa has undertaken a market study on call termination rates and is working on policy instruments to classify data as a new basic utility at the same level as water and electricity. This is foregrounded by the realisation that data has become a critical enabler of innovation and wealth creation.

Smart Broadcasting

South Africa is on course to finalize the digitization of broadcasting. Given the prevalence of smart tv's in the country, a cloud-based streaming platform for content distribution is being developed. This will trigger growth in the broadcasting and entertainment sector. At the same time we will promote the production of Smart devices and related products.

DigiTech

In order to promote digital products developed in the country and to support and expand market participation and reach, South Africa has developed a digital portal called DigiTech. It is a platform for tech entrepreneurs to facilitate meaningful economic partnerships between local and international stakeholders.