

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY**



**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY MESSAGE FOR THE 46<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRICAN  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION (ATU)/ICT DAY, 2023**



**THEME:**

**“TOWARDS A DIGITAL REVOLUTION AND INCLUSION OF THE  
MARGINALIZED: ADDRESSING ACCESSIBILITY FACTORS”**

The African Telecommunications Union (ATU)/ICT Day is observed annually on the 7th of December. This year, the United Republic of Tanzania is actively participating in the celebration of African Telecommunications/ICT Day in conjunction with the 46th anniversary of the establishment of ATU. The primary objective of this occasion is to reflect on the status of telecommunications and ICTs in Africa, evaluate our progress, envision the future, and enhance collaborative efforts to propel the digital landscape across the continent.

The theme for the 46th African Telecommunications/ICT Day, "Towards a Digital Revolution and Inclusion of the Marginalized: Addressing Accessibility Factors," was formally adopted during the Administrative Council meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, for this year's celebration. This theme underscores the critical need to bridge the digital divide, a recurring focus in our activities throughout the year. The 2023 theme enables ATU members, including Tanzania and other key stakeholders, to concentrate on opportunities for closing the digital gap.

The Government of Tanzania has been actively pursuing digital transformation and inclusion within our country. I am pleased to share the progress and efforts that the Government of Tanzania has undertaken in our journey towards digital transformation and inclusion.

The government acknowledges that genuine digital inclusion hinges on accessibility and recognizes the significant potential of ICT as an enabler for socio-economic empowerment. This recognition is based on the notable achievements Tanzania has made in recent years, such as enacting laws and regulations to strengthen sector management, establishing the National ICT Broadband Backbone (NICTBB) Infrastructure connecting all major towns and numerous public offices, improving universal access to ICT services, enabling electronic money transfers through mobile telephone platforms, and developing a postcode and physical addressing system.

In light of these accomplishments, policies and initiatives are grounded in the principle that technology should be accessible to all, including those facing physical, economic, or social barriers. The belief is that technology, when harnessed inclusively, can be a powerful force for positive change. To actualize this belief, the government has implemented various digital transformation initiatives, including strategies to strengthen the National ICT Broadband Backbone (NICTBB), National Internet Data Centre (NIDC), National ICT Policy (2016) and its Implementation Strategy, e-Government operationalization, National Cyber Security Strategy 2016, and the Financial Sector Development Master Plan 2020/21 – 2029/30. These initiatives align with the National Development Vision 2025 and the Five-Year Development Plans.

To address the digital divide and promote digital inclusion, every country must implement robust policies, laws, and regulations. Tanzania has taken significant strides in this direction with the implementation of its National ICT Policy 2016. This policy aims to empower Tanzanians by fostering a society where individuals experience economic, social, and cultural enrichment through access to information and communication technology (ICT). The primary objective is to expedite socio-economic development, with the potential to transform Tanzania into an ICT-driven middle-income economy and society.

Key laws instrumental in enforcing the policy include the Electronic and Postal Communication Act of 2010, the e-Government Act of 2019, the Universal Communication Access Act of 2006, and the TCRA Act of 2003. The Government of Tanzania is currently in the process of revising the existing ICT Policy to

accommodate rapidly changing technology and services, ensuring access and inclusivity for all citizens.

In line with this year's celebration theme, "Towards a Digital Revolution and Inclusion of the Marginalized: Addressing Accessibility," digital infrastructure development is a top priority for expanding and enhancing digital capabilities across the country. This encompasses deploying high-speed broadband networks to connect even the most remote areas, ensuring that every Tanzanian citizen can access the opportunities presented by the digital age.

The country is actively expanding digital infrastructure, including the National ICT Broadband Backbone, to establish quality mobile telecom networks nationwide. This effort aims to enable citizens to benefit from the digital revolution, fostering the development of digital-based services in finance, health, education, public administration, judicial services, and market information. Reliable and easily accessible ICT infrastructure is crucial for the smooth and cost-effective operation of businesses and the facilitation of social services. Such infrastructure accelerates the digital revolution enhanced by digital technologies, which are now pervasive in various sectors of the economy and social life, from telecommunications and finance to governance, marketing, and service delivery.

To expedite the digital revolution, the sector is focusing on key interventions, including the expansion of the National Telecommunication Broadband infrastructure and services in collaboration with service providers and other private sector stakeholders, as well as the development of a Physical Address system in all wards.

Several successful e-Government initiatives were implemented to enhance accessibility and efficiency in public service delivery. In 2019, the Government established the e-Government Authority (e-GA) to oversee and promote these initiatives. The e-GA streamlined processes, reduced bureaucracy, and improved the efficiency of public services, enabling public institutions to offer digital services to citizens, businesses, and government employees. This resulted in expedited and more convenient transactions, benefiting both citizens and businesses.

Digital inclusivity, crucial for socio-economic development, cannot be achieved without citizens possessing digital literacy. Recognizing this, the Government of Tanzania is investing in programs to empower citizens with the necessary skills to navigate the digital landscape. Initiatives target schools, communities, and

businesses to ensure inclusivity in the digital era. The goal is to equip every Tanzanian, regardless of background, with the essential digital skills, involving the integration of digital literacy programs into educational curricula and offering training opportunities. Specialized initiatives address the unique challenges faced by marginalized communities, encompassing infrastructure gaps, affordability concerns, and tailored digital literacy programs. Notable progress includes the establishment of Digital Clubs in educational institutions through the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), aimed at empowering youth in cyberspace-related matters.

In infrastructure development, the Government established the Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF) in 2007 to ensure universal communication access. The fund facilitates communication services, including ICT, Postal, and Broadcasting, even in economically unviable areas. From July 2022 to June 2023, UCSAF has built 304 towers in 291 wards, benefiting 3,343,565 citizens, improving access to communication services in rural and unserved areas.

The Government is dedicated to promoting ICT through innovation and customized solutions to address country and environmental challenges. Support for startups solving local issues and promoting inclusive economic growth is evident. The Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), established in 1986, coordinates research and technology development. COSTECH advises the government on science, technology, and innovation, prioritizing stakeholder requirements and advocating for universal design principles in digital solutions. The government also supports innovation benefiting marginalized groups through the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), providing valuable resources free of charge, including numbering and radio frequency spectrum resources.

In the digital age, technology plays a central role in daily life, benefiting areas like e-commerce and e-Government services for socio-economic development. Despite these advantages, potential threats lurk in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). As the Government of Tanzania embraces digital transformation, it remains committed to ensuring the security and privacy of its citizens. Robust cybersecurity measures, including the establishment of the Tanzania Computer Emergency Response Team (TZ-CERT) under the Electronic and Postal Act, are in place to coordinate responses to cyber threats at the national level, fostering cooperation with regional and international entities involved in cybersecurity management.

In April 2018, the Government of Tanzania developed Tanzania's National Cyber Security Strategy (NCSS) to proactively address emerging cyber threats. Ensuring the security of information resources and National Critical Information Infrastructure demands a systematic and holistic approach. This necessitates coordinated efforts between the government, private sector, civil society, and international collaboration, emphasizing information sharing related to cybersecurity in our continued use of ICT for social and economic development.

Recognizing the pivotal role of the private sector in digital inclusion, the Government of Tanzania actively engages with industry stakeholders to foster digital innovation. Achieving a digital revolution and inclusive accessibility requires collaborative efforts. We are proactively collaborating with non-governmental organizations, private sector partners, and civil society to pool resources and expertise. Through such partnerships, we aim to magnify the impact of our initiatives, effectively reaching all citizens, including marginalized populations. The government is committed to creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive, attract investments, and contribute to the growth of the digital economy through effective laws and regulations.

In addressing the digital divide, our ultimate goal is to leave no one behind. Targeted strategies are being implemented to bridge the digital gap, with a specific focus on marginalized communities and vulnerable populations. Initiatives are in place to tackle affordability challenges and ensure inclusivity in the digital landscape. The Government of Tanzania remains steadfast in advancing digital transformation and inclusion, recognizing the transformative power of technology and its potential to uplift the nation. Through collaborative efforts and strategic partnerships, our aim is to create a digitally inclusive Tanzania that benefits all its citizens.

Wishing all Tanzanians, ICT stakeholders, and African Member States an exciting and memorable ATU/ICT Day 2023.



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