



## SIDE EVENT

### “Driving Africa’s industrialization agenda by investing in young people’s digital innovations”

#### Background

Digital technologies are precipitating the fourth industrial revolution by recharacterizing industry and opening up opportunities in various sectors such as agriculture, services and clean energy that have the capacity to drive industrialization and diversification, while adapting for climate resilience. Central to this is the fact that Africa’s current 167 million Internet users are predominantly young people and they are the major innovators and contributors to Africa’s growing digital economy. In addition, Africa has the youngest population in the world, and it is estimated that by 2055, the continent’s youth population (aged 15–24) will be more than double the 2015 total of 226 million. Therefore, young people’s voices need to be incorporated in policymaking and decision-making in order to realize sustained industrialization on the continent. To enhance the chances of Africa’s young people succeeding in the digital economy, effective strategies need to be adopted in order to engage and empower young people to build viable and sustainable digitally savvy enterprises across African borders, thereby enhancing rapid digitization from the bottom up. As technology brings opportunity, it will pave the way for the creation of new jobs, increased productivity, effective delivery of public services and many more positive benefits.

#### Objective

The main objective of the side event is to provide stakeholders with a platform for discussion and to enhance participants’ understanding of the digital economy, its expected impact on the African continent and the role of African young people in its growth. The discussion will centre around practical and actionable steps that can be taken to ensure that young people utilize technology to

address Africa’s development challenges in a sustainable manner. The approach will entail troubleshooting aimed at highlighting key challenges that impede effective digitization in Africa, and dialogue in order to create a youth-led open space and voice for young people to interact and set their own development goals for a sustainable digital economy across Africa.

Confirmation of participation and additional information on the side event can be obtained from:

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