

# Message from the Vice President of the Republic of Seychelles

World Telecommunication & Information Society Day, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## **“Accelerating Digital Transformation in challenging times”**



This year marks 156 years since the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865, which marked the establishment of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Since 1865, every year on 17<sup>th</sup> May, the world celebrates World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD). This year, this is not an exception despite the COVID-19 crisis and the theme for this year's WTISD is ***“Accelerating Digital Transformation in challenging times”***.

Seychelles is indeed going through a challenging time just like each and every country around the world. While our health care professionals and essential workers battle this pandemic, the Government, businesses and the community had to quickly adapt to technologies and find innovative ways to continue their activities to remain resilient and sustain our economy while we protect the lives of our people and that of our visitors. Seychelles' digital transformation since the onset of the pandemic is noticeable and felt by each and every one of us. We have seen our education system moving quickly from the exclusive on-site teaching to virtual classes for our students and teachers. While face-to-face meetings became almost non-existent and shifted to online meetings, businesses and the Government had to adapt to working from home and continue to provide their services remotely. There has been an increasing roll out of e-services by both the private and public sectors. The community had to adjust to new ways of going about their business with an increased possibilities to undertake local online payments and purchases for products and services. Businesses moved to digital platforms with new and innovative ways to ensure continuity of their businesses. This has accelerated the adoption of digital solutions and channels for the delivery of their services and products which in turn created new businesses opportunities such as delivery services. There has also been an increase locally in the development of software solutions and applications to support businesses and to assist our healthcare professionals on the frontline, battling the pandemic.

Despite the numerous instances of digital transformation happening in the country, the community continues to face several set-backs, thus limiting the full potential of the digital transformation from being achieved. This includes the slow internet connectivity for some internet packages and unlimited internet packages that remain unaffordable for a large number of our citizens. This has been an ongoing debate within the community and an ongoing effort by the Government to have improvements. However, we have seen Telecommunication Service providers who have played their part in easing the digital transformation and assisting their customers through this difficult time. They have been providing extra data to their customers at no extra cost; which was a relief to those working from home and provided extra data to their customers with students so that they can have access to the virtual classes and continue their studies online. There is still more to be done to ensure that an even larger part of our population is able to benefit from the digital transformation that is taking place in businesses and Government. The Government remains committed to doing all it can to improve the situation.