

**SPEECH**  
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**Digital4Development 2nd Multi stakeholder event**  
**Brussels, 20 March 2019**

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues

I am honoured to be here today, and it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Digital4Development 2<sup>nd</sup> Multi-stakeholder event. It is of key importance for the EU to take on the opportunities offered by the digital revolution that have deep global implications, and at the same time address the new threats and challenges.

From 2017 onwards, digitalisation has achieved more and more importance on the development cooperation agenda of the EU, being reflected in the strategic policy documents of the European Commission, including the New European Consensus on Development, as well as in our new strategic approach, presented in SWD: “Digital4Development: mainstreaming digital technologies and services into EU Development Policy”.

Digitalisation plays also a key role in the most recent " Communication on a new Africa – Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs: Taking our partnership for investment and jobs to the next level", announced by President Juncker at the State of the Union speech.

Further, in order to support sustainable investments in an integrated way, the EU is using innovative financing mechanisms such as the External Investment Plan for Africa and the Neighbourhood, that is already attracting the interest financing institutions and private investors. Under a specific digital “window” of the European Fund for Sustainable Development, the guarantee scheme of the EIP, four digital proposals have already been endorsed.

These proposals cover a wide range of sector. They aim at improving health care with high-quality screening labs<sup>1</sup>, providing affordable high-speed broadband connectivity mainly in rural areas in the

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<sup>1</sup> Digital European Health Guarantee Platform, EIB/Gates Foundation - Geographic scope: Africa; Guarantee up to EUR80 million; Technical Assistance up to EUR 20 million. Lead FI: EIB.

Neighbourhood<sup>2</sup>, investing in digital innovation projects with a high social impact<sup>3</sup> and boosting private investment in innovative start-ups<sup>4</sup>. As you see, Digitalisation is indeed a driver of change and development.

I would like to welcome the members of the EU-AU Digital Economy Task Force (DETF). DETF, launched in December 2018, is one of the tools to achieve the ambitions set out under the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investments and Jobs. The Task Force, by bringing together key stakeholders from both continents will provide recommendations on policies and measures that can support pan-African digital integration. A first presentation of the DETF suggestions will be delivered during this meeting.

Finally, I would also like to welcome the members of the Digital4Development Coalition, a consultative body for regular sectoral policy dialogues, consisting of stakeholders including the private sector, civil society, and national development agencies. The coalition members are all working together to support the implementation of the D4D agenda and to formulate concrete policy recommendations. The D4D coalition will present today the outcomes of the three workshops they organised, on smart cities, connectivity, and entrepreneurship.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we are here to identify further ways to promote the implementation of the D4D agenda in order to boost inclusive growth and jobs creation in our partner countries. I believe that we have a tremendous opportunity to work together to create synergies and promote a cross-sectoral approach between the EU, private sector, academia and civil society in partner countries.

Thank you

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<sup>2</sup> Joint PIP: Digital Transformation Platform, EIB and Broadband Investment Programme, EBRD (Neighbourhood). Guarantee: up to EUR 70 million; Technical Assistance: up to EUR 3 million; Lead FIs: EIB and EBRD (PIP approved by the EFSD Operational/Strategic Boards).

<sup>3</sup> SIFA – Social Impact Fund for Africa – the target of the project is MSME growth through social entrepreneurship and digital innovation in Africa; SIFA will support new or young social enterprises that implement digital solutions to achieve significant social impact and operating in sectors such as education, health, agriculture and clean/renewable energy.

<sup>4</sup> FMO - Ventures Programme – the project focuses on innovative start-ups that use digitalization to improve and/or enable access to products and services for underserved parts of the population, investing in 6-8 fund investments diversified across investment stage (seed/early stage/growth) and geographies