

Introduction: Microsoft and the UN

- Your Excellency, Ambassador **Collen Vixen Kelapile**, President of the Economic and Social Council, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great honor to participate in this session.
- As we heard in earlier panels, this year's HLPF takes place against a backdrop of unprecedented global challenges. But the SDGs remains the universal framework for sustainable development.
- And Microsoft supports the SDGs: our mission statement is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.
- This means ensuring that communities around the world, including the hardest to reach and traditionally excluded groups, have access to connectivity, education, opportunity, skills, human rights, and an environment to thrive.
- The Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation stated: "Of the SDG's 17 goals and 169 targets, not a single one is detached from the implications and potential of digital technology."
- So to reach the SDGs, we need to use technology. And this is best done through partnerships - working across governments, international organizations, business, and civil society.

- This commitment to a collaborative multistakeholder approach is at the heart of Microsoft's UN and International Organizations Office, which I am honored to lead.
- And our commitment is underlined by the appointment last year by the Secretary General of our Vice-chair and President, **Brad Smith**, as an SDG Advocate.
- We publish each year an SDG showing how we contribute to advancing all the SDGs.
- But given our time today, Let me just say a few words about one: SDG4 / Quality Education.

Transition:

- We know that to reach the 2030 Agenda we must bring forward the furthest behind communities and traditionally excluded groups.
- And to truly empower the hardest to reach communities, they need access to technology, skills, and opportunity so they can pursue education and in-demand jobs. Access to education and the resources to learn skills is inequitable.

Quality Education (SDG #4)

- The latest estimates are that 147 million children missed more than half of their in-class instruction over the past two years.
- **Digital Transformation can drive a Learning Recovery:** there are not many effective models for education transformation at scale in the least developed countries (LDCs). So Microsoft is coordinating a call to action with various donors and industry partners for design solutions to the challenges impacting education systems within these developing markets.
- The goal is to bring together innovative financing, technological solutions, and policy development to demonstrate how solutions can be deployed at scale.
- A practical illustration of this approach can be seen in our current efforts with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, partnering with GPE and UNICEF to deliver a package that balances the Ministry's immediate priorities for devices, training, and capacity building against their long-term plan to establish a resilient digital infrastructure platform by 2025. Microsoft recently extended this initial Digital Transformation Learning Recovery engagement in partnership with the Asia Development Bank exploring innovative financing models to support national sector planning priorities addressing specific challenges outlined by 5 national governments in Asia.

- Turning to a second example: Microsoft has also partnered with UNICEF to provide education for displaced young people through **Learning Passport**, a digital platform that helped ensure continuity of education during the pandemic. As of April this year, Learning Passport had surpassed 2 million users and was live across 20 countries, including Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, and the Ukraine. An additional 25 countries are in the deployment process. And we are now also developing the **Passport to Earning** to help over 10 million young people around the world acquire the skills they need to secure a job over the next three years.
- These are just a few examples. I will stop there given the time we have.

Conclusion

- We look forward to continuing to partner with Governments, civil society, and the UN and drive progress on the 2030 Agenda. Microsoft stands ready to be a trusted partner.