

# UNDP commends incorporation of technology in Sibaya, elections

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative Rose Ssebatindira has commended the incorporation of digital technology in the elections and Sibaya.

Ssebatindira said the value-add of e-platforms in the aforementioned national activities demonstrates the role of digital technology in advancing civic engagement and political participation.

She was speaking during a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between the UN agency tasked with helping countries eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth and human development and the regulatory body responsible for regulating the communications sector in the country, the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM).

Through the MoU, UNDP and ESCCOM have committed to collaborate in enhancing universal access to information communications and technology (ICT) services at an affordable cost, with a special focus on women, young people and those living with disabilities as the most marginalised.

She noted that the country faces a digital divide, in particular, the lack of affordable broadband internet and appropriate digital skills that have prevented many people, especially the most vulnerable, from working, studying and accessing various government services.

"As UNDP, we are committed to supporting countries build inclusive, ethical and sustainable digital societies," she stated, further commending ESCCOM on its leadership and foresight in the development of the Eswatini



**ESCCOM Chief Executive Mvilawemphi Dlamini with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative Rose Ssebatindira.**

National Digital Strategy, which sets the vision of the country being a connected, participatory, innovative and inclusive digital economy.

"Implementation of this strategy requires a cross-sectoral approach and the equal and collaborative effort of government, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, development partners and the participation of all citizens," said Ssebatindira.

## Establishment

One of the activities to be covered in the MoU include establishment of local content hubs to enhance content quality production in the multi-media sector to enhance youth employability, entrepreneurship and appropriate skills, through the development of local and indigenous content that meets international standards.

Ssebatindira said the implementing partner was the Small Enterprises Development Company (SEDCO), who would be tasked with ensuring that the facilities are designed as one stop centres providing ICT training, business development, marketing linkages, financial services and business mentoring.

ESCCOM Chief Executive

Mvilawemphi Dlamini expressed gratitude to UNDP for their commitment and genuine eagerness to support and facilitate the realisation of the country's goals and aspirations.

He said the agency's focus on driving digital transformation wasn't only commendable, but also very much aligned to the Commission's vision of enhancing transparency and accountability.

"This initiative, in particular, aims to improve service delivery, ensuring that access to ICTs becomes more inclusive, especially for the most marginalised segments of our population," said Dlamini.

He pledged the Commission's utmost dedication to achieving the objectives laid out in the MoU, applauding how he sees the partnership playing a pivotal role in accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"These goals encompass vital indicators such as reducing youth unemployment, bolstering food security, broadening access to ICTs, digitising services, and fostering financial inclusion throughout the country," he stated.

## UNDP Resident Representative makes last speech in Eswatini

UNITED Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative Rose Ssebatindira got the UN house meeting room teary when she announced that she had made her last speech in the country yesterday as her tenure had come to an end.

The soft-spoken Ssebatindira

shocked the room when she informed everyone present at the UN agency and the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) that she would soon be leaving the country upon concluding her eloquently delivered speech.

"This was my last speech in Eswatini and I will miss you all dearly," she

said, cheerlessly.

After her speech, ESCCOM Chief Executive Mvilawemphi Dlamini stepped into the podium and said he was quite sad that the partnership was starting when Ssebatindira's term was coming to an end as he strongly believed she would have made sure it bears results.