

It is the elderly person scammed off their pension because they clicked the wrong link.

It is the small business losing income because of online fraud.

These are not abstract risks; they are lived experiences.

Through our work across government:

- **We are strengthening cybersecurity systems across departments, with 99.8% network availability and improved resilience.**
- **We are building capacity to protect critical infrastructure and public data.**
- **And we are ensuring that digital transformation does not come at the cost of citizens' safety because digital inclusion without protection is not empowerment, it is exposure.**

Chairperson,

This is where the work of the Film and Publication Board becomes essential because cybersecurity is not only about systems, but also about people.

It is about what South Africans encounter when they go online.

Through the FPB:

- Thousands of citizens are being engaged through awareness programmes on cyberbullying, harmful content, deepfakes, and online exploitation
- Over 4,300 participants have already been reached through targeted outreach initiatives
- Ongoing research is helping us understand emerging threats in real time

What does this mean in practice?

It means a parent is better equipped to guide their child online.

It means a young person understanding the risks before they are exposed to harm.

It means communities becoming more aware, more vigilant, and more resilient.

Because a connected society must also be a safe, informed, and a protected society.

SKILLING THE NATION FOR THE DIGITAL FUTURE

Chairperson...

Protection alone is not enough.

If we are serious about inclusion, then we must invest in digital skills at scale, because access without skills is frustration.

That is why the work of NEMISA is so critical.

This is an institution whose primary responsibility is to enhance South Africa's digital skills capacity through training in creative media, ICT and 4IR technologies.

It is an institution that empowers youth and previously disadvantaged communities to improve employability and support digital entrepreneurship.

In this regard, we are seeing real progress:

- **Over 45,000 South Africans trained in digital literacy**
- **Nearly 12,000 SMMEs supported**
- **More than 3,000 individuals trained in emerging technologies**

Behind these numbers are real stories.

It is the young person who learns basic coding and begins to see new possibilities.

It is the small business owner who moves from informal trading to online platforms.

It is the unemployed graduate who gains a skill that opens a door.

And yet, everywhere we go, the message is the same:

“We need more.”

The demand for digital skills is growing faster than our current capacity.

And that is both a challenge... and an opportunity.

Chairperson,

Participation in the digital economy is not automatic. It requires access to platforms, tools, and identity.

It is why institutions like the ZA Domain Name Authority are fundamental for the growth of the sector.

The Domain Naming System has both a developmental and economic significance.

The significance lies in enabling accessibility, scalability, and security, which are critical for digital commerce and technological growth.

Through the work of ZA Domain Name Authority:

- **Over 100 registrar and reseller training programmes have been conducted**
- **Targeted efforts are empowering youth, women, SMMEs and persons with disabilities**

What does this mean?

It means a young entrepreneur can register a domain and take their business online.

It means a small enterprise can move from operating locally... to being visible globally.

This is how we begin to democratise the digital economy, not just for large players, but for ordinary South Africans.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN POST OFFICE

Honourable Members,

Even as we digitise, we must remember that for many South Africans, access still depends on physical points of service.

That is why the role of South African Post Office remains important.

We are seeing encouraging signs:

- **An 86% reduction in net losses, down to R71 million**
- **Growth in key services and improved governance**
- **The appointment of the board of executives is at an advanced stage**

But more importantly, we are seeing the beginnings of stability and with that, the potential to restore trust, because inclusion means meeting people where they are.

Chairperson,

Inclusion must also be financial.

Through Postbank:

- **We have achieved over R150 million in profit before tax**
- **Expanded to more than 230 sites nationwide**
- **Created more than 600 youth jobs**
- **And are reaching an additional 650,000 beneficiaries through ongoing rollout** But

beyond the numbers...

This is the pensioner receiving their grant safely.

This is the young person opening their first account.

This is the worker transacting without travelling long distances or paying high fees.

This is dignity in practice.

BETTER AFRICA, BETTER WORLD: THE ATU SG CAMPAIGN

Chairperson,

Our work does not stop at our borders.

Through our participation in the African Telecommunications Union:

- **We are contributing to shaping Africa's digital future**
- **Strengthening cooperation on connectivity, innovation and regulation**
- **And ensuring that South Africa plays a leading role on the continent**

The digital economy is not only national, but also continental and global.

Chairperson,

It is also encouraging that South Africa continues to position itself strongly within continental digital leadership spaces.

We are proud that South Africa has presented Ms Cynthia Lesufi as its candidate for the position of Secretary-General of the African Telecommunications Union for the 2027–2030 term.

Ms Lesufi brings extensive experience in the ICT and digital policy environment, with a strong understanding of the continent’s evolving telecommunications landscape and the importance of digital inclusion for developing economies.

Importantly, her candidacy also represents a significant moment for gender representation in the sector, as one of the first woman to be positioned for this role within ATU.

Her leadership, institutional knowledge, and understanding of Africa’s developmental priorities position her as a strong candidate to help drive a more connected, inclusive, and digitally capable continent.

Honourable Members,

As I conclude...

When we speak about cybersecurity, skills, institutions, and inclusion, we are speaking about one thing:

People.

The learner navigating the internet for the first time.
The entrepreneur trying to grow a business.
The family trying to access services.
The citizen trying to stay safe online.

So, the question we must ask ourselves is simple:

Are we making it easier for them to participate or harder? because if we are not making it easier, then we must do more.

Because somewhere in this country this afternoon, someone is trying to connect to opportunity.

Our responsibility is to make sure that connection is not a privilege but a reality.

I thank you.

