



MINISTRY  
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

*From the desk of*

**Deputy Minister Pinky Kekana**

---

Keynote Address

GirlCode Global Summit

Virtual Summit : Online 9:30-10am

23 April 2020

---

Good Morning to

- Zandile Mkwanazi, The Chairwoman of GirlCode;
- Tinyiko Simbine, co-founder of GirlCode;
- Neroshnee Raga, Director SAP technology Consulting at Accenture;
- The other esteemed speakers on the agenda; and
- The young ladies and girls attending online from all over the world

Firstly, I want to send a special wish to the ITU, and my friend and first ever woman elected official in ITU's 155 years history, Ms Doreen

Bogdan-Martin, Director, BDT, ITU to wish them a Happy International Girls in ICT Day.

The ITU's International Girls in ICT Day is part of the Plenipotentiary Resolution 70.

This day is declared as such, to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider studies and careers in the growing field of information and communication technologies.

Resolution 70 calls for all ITU members to celebrate and commemorate International Girls in ICT, and today we are here on this 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of April, the 23<sup>rd</sup> in 2020.

This is my first virtual keynote, and I'm revelling in this amazing thing we call technology. It is technology that makes this summit possible, and for you and I to be together today. What a poetic way to celebrate this day!

If there is one thing that has been made clear in the last few weeks of the lockdown in South Africa and the rest of the world, is that technology has been a human dependency.

Technology has literally saved lives, technology has kept us together while we are forced to be apart, technology has kept a semblance of the economy still going. When all is said and done, nothing can take away from what technology has given us over the last few weeks, and will continue to, until we are rid of this disease, and beyond.

What it has also taught us, is how much more strategic it needs to be, and the role it plays in business for the economy, in healthcare for medical advancements, in data collection for prevention and communication – the list goes on.

If technology is going to become even more important in the future, than it is already, it presents many opportunities for employment and career development. Even more than it does now.

If it is the current game changer during this pandemic, and will continue to disrupt as our world changes towards a new normal, then it means there will be more capacity, more resources, more innovation, and more people required for this.

As we know, 4IR, or the FIR, or Industry 4.0 is driven by the coming together of physical and digital technologies. The disruptive technologies of the Internet of Things (IoT), Robotics, Virtual Reality

(VR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are changing the way we live and work, and will definitely impact how we receive information, work, and even entertain ourselves.

This pandemic has fast-tracked our dependency on technology, and where we were lagging behind in certain respects, we are now forced to leap frog these aspects of technology, whether it's infrastructure, cost, education, etc, we have to ensure that technology becomes more optimised and integrated into our lives, for our benefit.

The opportunities for South Africa and Africa are immense in this new era of technological advancement. We have so much available to us to drive the continent forward, and in saying that, every one of us has a role to play in putting Africa and South Africa on the map. My hope is that this summit will be an opportunity for you to share and gain knowledge, which will allow you to do just that put South Africa and Africa on the global stage.

Women owning the global technology stage is my dream and one I know I will see in my lifetime, because of you, because of seminars like this, and because I know young women and girls will take over the world one day – you are evidence of that.

In this new normal we find ourselves in, we are having to move very quickly and with precision and efficiency, being more agile in adapting and leading new business models, and we are at a critical point of our technological evolution, not only in South Africa, but in the world.

The game is not changing. The game has changed!

As women and girls, you have never been in a better position than you are today, to take advantage of the opportunities that exist, because of those that came before you. It will be up to you, what you do with those opportunities, but also how you will pay it forward, so that every generation of women will open new doors and new opportunities for the next generation.

I don't believe we have a choice in ensuring the next generation are given more opportunities than we were, and as generations progress, we have more and more.

Perhaps, now more than ever, in the history of our industry, we are FINALLY in the driver's seat – the journey and the road ahead might

not be the smoothest, but it will be interesting and fulfilling. Our destination of success is up to us. It's in our hands.

As the President said 2 nights ago – we have to revitalise our economy as we face the worst time in recent human history. But, this also means, that the world of technology is about to explode with even more opportunities – are you ready? Are you prepared? If not, then start. Start today. Start now.

Take advantage of every opportunity there is.

Where you do not see an opportunity, create one.

Where you see an opportunity for another, show them, take them with you.

Do not get left behind, and leave no woman and girl behind – I urge you!

I challenge you to turn this world on it's head by making your presence in the technology sector known.

In closing, as I wish you a wonderful celebration of International Girls in ICT Day, I'd like to leave you with this:

Take up space in the industry!

Make a difference!

Change the world!

Malibongwe!