Thank you, madam co-facilitator,

Uganda recognizes the WSIS framework as a cornerstone for inclusive and ICT-driven sustainable development and our national efforts are geared toward reinforcing global targets. Uganda's digital journey is guided by the AU Agenda 2063, especially Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Progress has been made in various sectors and including digitization of the energy and extractives industry with deployment of digital systems but gaps still exist that have to be handled to deliver sustainable digitalization and improve service delivery.

Key priorities

Key priorities for WSIS implementations are increasing energy access, improving grid reliability, increasing local manufacturing and innovations in the low-income countries, sustainable extraction of the critical minerals, promotion of data centres, sustainable waste management across the value chain, climate change and gender.

Key challenges

Key challenges include: limited access and affordability, digital literacy gaps, limited infrastructure, uncoordinated ICT Initiatives, funding constraints, limited integration and moral degradation

Unstable power supply hinders ICT deployment and broader development goals calling for strategic planning capabilities and tools to enable stable and sustainable power supply to support digital transformation.

Critical Minerals play an essential role for global industries and digital transformation but these minerals also pose security concerns, including resource exploitation, geopolitical tensions, climate change challenges, biodiversity degradation, pollution and environmental risks and the need to pay critical attention to environmental sustainability of the value chain of critical minerals.

The waste from the digital transformation and electricity access have caused environmental pollution and the need to invest in recycling and recovery of waste paying attention to human rights and gender considerations.

What needs to be done?

i.   Facilitate increased energy access, grid reliability and affordability to support deployment of internet.

ii. Address the barriers to inclusive access for the persons with disabilities, youths, and other marginalized groups through targeted programs that ensure access to affordable, accessible digital services with culturally relevant content.
iii. Need for meaningful stakeholder engagement dialogues that enrich discussions with defined roles and accountability for Government, the private sector, academia and civil society.
iv. Need for enhanced funding and partnerships and fully integrated decision support platform.
v. Need for technology and regulatory readiness to strengthen policy coherence and institutional capacity.
vi. Need for inclusive digital society with targeted programs to ensure access to affordable, accessible digital services with culturally relevant content.
vii. Stakeholder Engagement and Accountability