

《S. Africa partners WEF to increase internet access》

DURBAN, South Africa, May 3 (Xinhua) -- The World Economic Forum (WEF) and the South African government will launch a new platform project which seeks to improve the internet access in the country, said South African Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services on Wednesday.

The project, called "South Africa Internet for All," is expected to increase internet use in the country, particularly in rural areas. According to the International Telecommunications Union, 52 percent of South Africans use the internet. This new mode of public-private collaboration will see many in the country accessing the internet for the first time.

Siyabonga Cwele, Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services, said at the 27th World Economic Forum on Africa in Durban, "The partnership with the World Economic Forum and local partners will help us accelerate our efforts to connect South Africans to the benefits of the internet."

"We are very pleased to welcome the World Economic Forum to South Africa to partner with the government on Internet for All. We value inclusive, multistakeholder efforts that will help bring many more South Africans onto the internet," said the minister.

The project will support the government's National Development Plan and South Africa Connect plans by addressing the barriers that prevent universal internet access. These include affordability, skills and awareness and infrastructure connectivity.

Jabu Mabuza, Chairperson of Telkom, welcomed the project which he said will accelerate Fourth Industrial Revolution in Africa as a catalyst for inclusive growth.

He said the project "creates fertile ground for sustainable, accelerated, inclusive economic growth in Africa."

The "Internet for All" platforms are already in use in countries like Argentina, Rwanda and Uganda.

South African Minister of Communications Ayanda Dlodlo also said education, training and skills for innovative and knowledge society are the key to the inclusive growth.

Dlodlo said the youth must be included in the Digital Revolution, and digital infrastructure should be affordable and available to youth for both social and economic development.

More than 1,000 participants are taking part in the 27th World Economic Forum on Africa in Durban, South Africa from May 3 to 5. The theme of the meeting is "Achieving Inclusive Growth through Responsive and Responsible Leadership."