

Vodafone's speech at the Opening Plenary, 17 Dec 2019
Joakim Reiter, Group External Affairs Director, Vodafone

I am delighted to be here today on behalf of Vodafone and Vodafone Foundation.

We believe every child has a right to a quality education.

The dire reality however, is that some 4 million refugee children are not in school currently, we run a real risk of a "lost generation", for these children, they are denied a fair start in life. They are refused the chance to break free from lifelong poverty, marginalisation and the indignity that forceful displacement often implies.

This must change.

That is why we are committing here today to expand our connected education programme – Instant Network Schools – in partnership with UNHCR. Our pledge is to bring quality digital education opportunities to over half a million young refugees. Helping to connect them to the education they deserve. We will build on the success of our current 36 Instant Network Schools in Kenya, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which have already benefitted 86,500 students and 1,000 teachers.

We will transform over 250 under resourced classrooms into digital learning hubs across 6 countries by 2025.

We will offer our technology and innovation, combined with local educational content in the form of our digital "school in a box".

We will provide free connectivity in all schools.

We will deploy of Vodafone volunteers, side by side with UNHCR, to roll out the schools, supporting teacher training and providing technical assistance.

Working in camps and with host communities, we want to improve education and digital skills for hundreds of thousands of young people. This ambitious expansion of refugee education – with UNHCR – is being done in tandem with our education platform for all youth in our African markets, which already includes one million learners.

This is our pledge. It is a clear demonstration of our commitment to the Global Goals and it is also a manifestation of our company's and all of our colleagues purpose to promote an inclusive and environmentally sustainable digital society with the objective of improving one billion lives, leaving no one behind.