**Presentation of Mr. Antoine NGOM, President, Organisation des Professionnels des TIC du**

**Sénégal** [**OPTIC**](http://www.optic.sn/)**.**

The resilience of a MSME during this crisis depends on many factors:

* The sector in which the company operates
* The international nature of its activity
* Its situation before COVID
* The situation of its partners (customers, suppliers, etc.)
* Support measures offered by his government
* Its ability to organize and re-invent itself to continue its activity remotely.

It is on these last 2 levers that it is especially possible to act.

First, the Government support measures during COVID: several countries have a resilience plan. Senegal, for example, has adopted a 1 billion 530 million Euro economic and social resilience plan, which includes support for MSMEs in fiscal, financial, work & health matters.

But as we know, the weakness of these plans is often linked to their modesty but also and above all to their operational ineffectiveness for MSMEs: indeed, the conditionalities and the formalism are not adapted to many MSMEs which are informal or outdated administratively.

However, we must commend countries that have put in place these plans, without which MSMEs from entire sectors such as tourism, aviation, etc. would have disappeared.

SMEs have also been able to mitigate the effect of COVID by using digital technology to work from home or remotely, but also by innovating and re-inventing their activity.

These resilience solutions make it possible to link up with the subject of our panel relating to solutions to accelerate the industrial and commercial restart of MSMEs. As with the resilience plan to mitigate the effects of COVID on MSMEs, all countries must have a recovery plan. This should allow consumption and investment to be boosted, and moreover enable new opportunities.

This crisis should be an opportunity to:

* build economic sovereignty for our countries and therefore build a real local or regional industrial fabric
* strengthen SME competitiveness programs.

The Covid-19 pandemic has finished convincing every one of the need for digital transformation of our businesses and in particular MSMEs for their resilience to crises and for their sustainability.

If there is one field where Africa and the ACP countries have a strong knowledge,

If there is one field where African and ACP expertise no longer needs to be demonstrated,

If there is one field where Africa innovates (example of Mobile Money),

If there is one field where project leaders and startups are very active in Africa,

If there is one field that the people of Africa have embraced in a very short time,

If there is one field that can have a very rapid impact on financial and economic inclusion in Africa (even the small-scale producer or the peanut seller access mobile services that can boost their activity),

It's the **digital** field!

This is why, our main recommendation is that all of our countries **must carry out a digital transformation program for businesses and administrations.**

Last but not least, it is innovation that will make the difference in the future post-COVID: I therefore campaign for the establishment of programs and funds to boost innovation.

This statement could be taken up by any counterpart in the private sector in the ACP zone because we are aiming for the same realities.

This is why we created the ROPNAOC Network with my counterparts in West and Central Africa.