LIBREVILLE, October 17 (Infosplusgabon) - Orange and the German Development Cooperation are inaugurating an "Orange Digital Center" in Abidjan, an ecosystem entirely dedicated to the development of digital skills and innovation, attended by the highest political and administrative authorities from Côte d'Ivoire, the Ambassador of Germany in Côte d'Ivoire, GIZ and members of the board and Orange Group Executive Committee led by its Chairman and CEO Stéphane Richard.

Spread over 1200 sq.m for Côte d'Ivoire, the Orange Digital Center brings together the four strategic programs of the Orange group, namely: a coding school Orange Digital Academy, a FabLab Solidaire – part of the Orange Foundation's digital manufacturing spaces–, an Orange Fab start-up accelerator and Orange Ventures Africa, the Orange Group investment fund. All these programmes provided are free-of charge and open to all. They range from digital training for young people, 90% of which are practical, start-up acceleration, guidance for project bearers and investment.

Orange has committed to creating an Orange Digital Center in each country where it operates to support the start-ups by 2025 as part of its Engage 2025 strategy. Together, Orange and Amazon Web Services (AWS) re/Start, will offer a free and certified, 12-week, full time cloud skills training program for unemployed and underemployed individuals to launch their cloud careers in 18 countries through Orange Digital Centers in Africa and the Middle East.

These include Tunisia, Senegal, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Jordan, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Morocco, Egypt, Madagascar, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Botswana, and the Central African Republic.

AWS re/Start is a skills-based training program that covers fundamental AWS Cloud skills and practical career skills, such as interviewing and resume writing, to help prepare individuals for an entry-level cloud position. The program also prepares and covers the cost for participants to

take the AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner Certification exam, validating their cloud skills with an industry-recognized credential. After the completion of the program, Orange and AWS will help connect graduates with employers.

This great project is a key step in our societal responsibility for digital inclusion, especially for young people and women

So far, eight Orange Digital Centers have already opened in the region: Tunisia, Senegal, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Morocco, and Mali. This means other inaugurations are still to come in 2021 and 2022.

Stéphane Richard, Chairman and CEO of Orange, says: "Orange acts as a responsible company across its activities. This sense of responsibility is a central value that has been placed at the heart of the Group's strategic plan, Engage 2025. To promote digital services as a vector for inclusion and to ensure they are available to the widest possible audience, we aim to open an Orange Digital Center in every country in which we are present by 2025. This ambition clearly demonstrates our determination to harness the positive power of digital innovation."

Alioune Ndiaye, Chairman and CEO of Orange Africa and the Middle East, says: "I am very proud to inaugurate with GIZ the fifth Orange Digital Center in Africa today in Côte d'Ivoire, which is part of the network of 32 Orange Digital Centers, including 18 in Africa and Middle East. Our main objective is to democratize access to new technologies and in particular through technological collaborators such as the one we have just signed with AWS to improve the employability of young African people."

Ingo Herbert, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Côte d'Ivoire says: "The future of Côte d'Ivoire is its youth - and digital is the future of the world. This initiative aims to strengthen young people's access to the labor market as well as to entrepreneurship so that they can fully contribute to a better future for their generation and Côte d'Ivoire as a whole."

Mamadou Bamba, CEO of Orange Côte d'Ivoire, says: "Discussions are underway between Orange Côte d'Ivoire and the Ministry of Higher Education for the digital transformation of universities in Côte d'Ivoire. An Orange Digital Center Club will be installed in universities in the region, thus completing the system to give as many people possible access to new technologies and support in using them to their full extent."

Orange is present in 18 countries in Africa and the Middle East and has more than 130 million customers at of 30 June 2020. With 5.8 billion euros of revenues in 2020, Orange MEA is the first growth area in the Orange group. Orange Money, its flagship mobile-based money transfer and financial services offer is available in 17 countries and has more than 50 million customers. Orange, multi-services operator, key partner of the digital transformation provides its expertise to support the development of new digital services in Africa and the Middle East.

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