

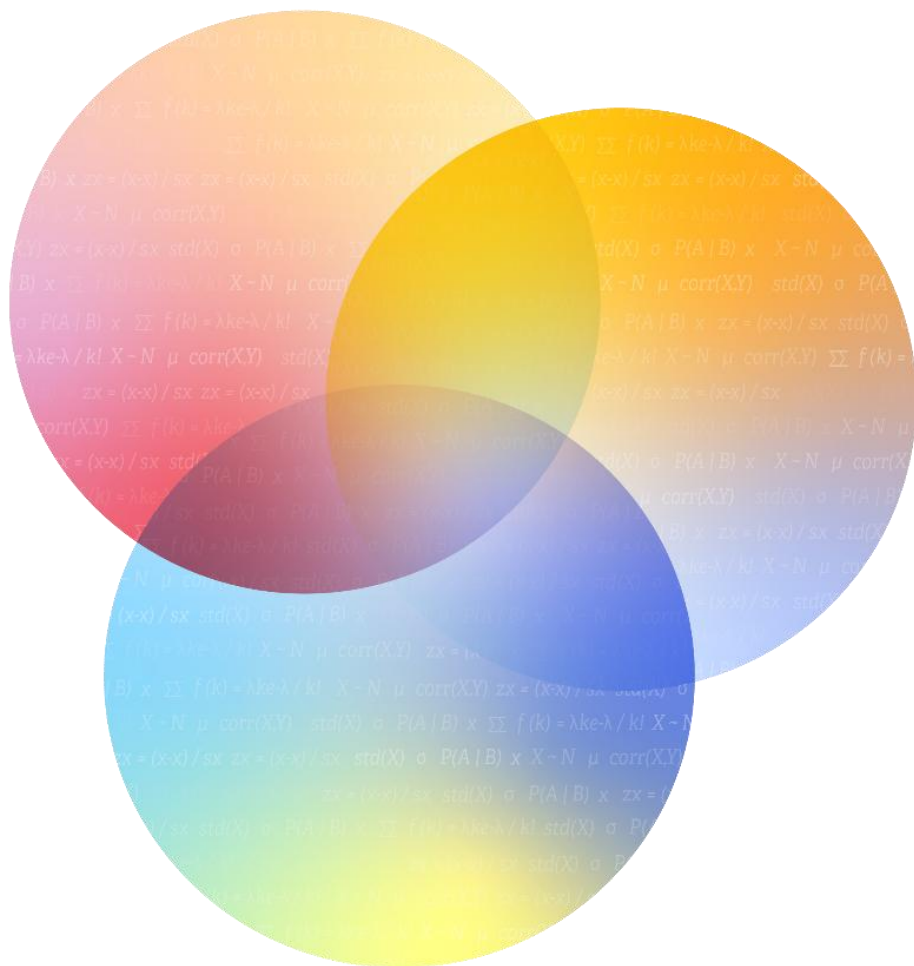


ITUWTIS
GENEVA2025

World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium 2025

Summary Report

22-23 September 2025



WTIS@20: The past, present and future of digital development statistics

The 20th World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS-25) took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 23 September 2025.

Under the theme “*WTIS@20: The Past, Present, and Future of Digital Development Statistics*”, the event brought together policymakers, business leaders, regulators, statisticians, researchers, and representatives of international organizations to discuss pressing challenges, emerging priorities, and solutions in ICT measurement.

WTIS-25 featured 34 speakers and attracted 270 participants, including 180 on-site, from 85 countries. Forty-three percent of the participants were women.

The event reflected on nearly three decades of progress since the first symposium in 1996,

spotlighted current priorities, and explored the evolving data needs that are shaping the future of digital development. It provided a platform to discuss emerging challenges such as data governance, financing, digital inclusion, and measurement of the digital economy and digital wellbeing.

This report presents key highlights of each session. The [WTIS-25 webpage](#) contains additional information, including the [webcast of all sessions](#), the [WTIS-25 communiqué](#), and background resources. Photos are available on [Flickr](#), and a [highlights video](#) is available on YouTube. For more information about ITU’s statistical work, visit the [ICT Data and Analytics Division’s webpage](#) or write to indicators@itu.int.

Programme

[Interactive version](#)

Day 1 Monday, 22 September	Day 2 Tuesday, 23 September
WTIS-25 opening ceremony	Session: Shaping the future of digital development household statistics: Measuring cybercrime and a report from the ITU Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators
Keynote: Keynote keeping pace with digital transformation: National data agencies perspectives	Session: Beyond access: Measuring digital well-being for all
Session: Adapting digital development statistics to evolving policy priorities	Information session: ITU@work: Datahub and Data Hackathon <i>This session is not part of the official programme.</i>
Session: Financing digital development statistics	Session: Broadening the scope: Monitoring global digital commitments – Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development
Session: Expanding horizons in digital development statistics: From satellites to sub-national insights and a Report from the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators	Session: Scaling use of mobile phone data for official statistics
	Closing of WTIS-25

WTIS-25 Opening ceremony



Speakers

- [Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava](#), Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, International Telecommunication Union
- [Tomas Lamanauskas](#), Deputy Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union
- [Apolonija Oblak Flander](#), Director General National Statistics Office, Slovenia; WTIS-25 Chair

Summary

The 20th World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium opened with remarks from ITU leadership and the Chair of the Symposium. Speakers reflected on the achievements of WTIS, which has grown over nearly three decades into the foremost global platform for digital development statistics, before setting the stage for two days of discussions on how data can drive universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC).

Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava welcomed participants and underscored the importance of reliable and internationally comparable statistics. Data, he stressed, must be regular, granular, relevant and timely. He highlighted ongoing initiatives to close data gaps, including eight regional workshops on measuring universal and meaningful connectivity, supported by funding from the European Union, and upcoming workshops in Africa. He also pointed to new approaches to capacity-building, the use of big data, and partnerships at national, regional, and global levels. Dr. Zavazava announced upcoming events and initiatives, including regional workshops for producers and users of ICT data, the first Practitioners' workshop for ITU's statistical focal points organised as part of this ICT Data Week and a Data Hackathon with the ITU Global Innovation Centre in India, designed to harness data science to identify unconnected populations. Highlighted how the WTIS has

become the reference point for digital development statistics. He invited the large number of participants to reflect on progress and today's priorities, embrace creativity, improvement and innovation to strengthen digital development statistics and advance universal and meaningful connectivity.

Tomas Lamanauskas placed WTIS-25 within the broader historical context of ITU's work on data. He underlined that reliable statistics are essential for knowing "where we are and where we are going," and pointed to persisting gaps in critical areas such as digital skills, gender equality, and climate-related indicators. He reminded participants of the scale of the challenge, with 2.6 billion people still offline, and large disparities between high- and low-income countries in access to advanced mobile networks. Reliable data, he added, is also vital for ITU's own strategic and financial planning processes and for setting meaningful global targets.

The Chair of WTIS-25, Apolonija Oblak Flander, outlined the programme's main themes. These included financing ICT statistics, moving beyond national aggregates, leveraging new and alternative data sources, integrating emerging issues such as cybercrime, digital wellbeing and AI into official statistics, and monitoring commitments under the Global Digital Compact. She emphasized that these are not merely technical issues but central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, bridging digital divides, and ensuring that the digital future is both fast and fair.

The ceremony closed with a call for openness, collaboration and partnership across governments, national statistical offices, academia, the private sector, and international organizations. Only through joint efforts can the community continue to develop the innovative methods and robust data needed to achieve (UMC).

Keynote Keeping pace with digital transformation: National data agencies perspectives



Speaker

- [Paul Cheung](#), Director, Asia Competitiveness Institute, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

Summary

Joining remotely from Singapore, Prof. Paul Cheung set a clear challenge for the community: are national data agencies truly keeping pace with the scale and speed of digital transformation? He saluted WTIS's 20th edition and ITU's sustained convening role but urged a fresh look at what and how we measure in an economy and society being rapidly reshaped by digital technologies.

Using the technology "hype cycle" as a framing, he reflected on official statistics' mixed record with big data—significant effort but limited institutionalization—cautioning against repeating the same pitfalls as agencies pivot to AI. Digital transformation, he argued, has produced an end-to-end data ecosystem spanning sources, storage, analytics, visualization, and governance; statistical offices must intentionally position themselves within this ecosystem rather than bolt on tools to legacy processes.

Country examples illustrated the arc of capability-building. Korea's trajectory shows a shift from foundational data to data-driven value creation. Singapore's long investment in digital public infrastructure (DPI) enabled multimode census collection as early as 2000, the assembly of foundational multi-register databases (population, land, establishments, housing), trade systems (TradeNet/TradeTrust), and API-based inter-agency exchange under clear legal bases and "single

source of truth" custodianship. Abu Dhabi's 2024 census leveraged the government service platform TAMM to infer "signs of life," relationships, and residence, demonstrating how integrated platforms can accelerate register-based operations.

On AI, Prof. Cheung saw near-term utility in coding and classification and, more importantly, in analysing large administrative holdings to surface patterns and support prediction. He warned, however, about the full lifecycle cost and sustainability of bespoke AI systems, urging agencies to balance ambition with maintainability. He also flagged a widening global gap in DPI that risks divergent capabilities across statistical systems and complicates adoption of advanced methods.

Emerging priorities for measurement include: (i) ensuring that work on digital economy satellite accounts does not crowd out the sectoral statistics needed to trace how digital permeates production and services; (ii) systematically tracking cross-border data flows, domestic value-added in data processing, and the role of data centres; and (iii) bringing the "API economy" and digital intermediation platforms—now engines of digital activity—into the measurement frame.

Governance is pivotal. He called for models that integrate horizontal mandates (privacy, DPIs, AI, statistics) with vertical sector responsibilities; define data custodians and stewards; institutionalize SSOT practices; and advance "data as a service" to maximize reuse and value creation. Moving up the value chain—from collection to analytics and knowledge generation—demands new talent approaches: broader entry disciplines, mid-career recruitment, and continuous training.

In the Q&A, participants raised capacity in underserved communities (he emphasized incentives and local capability development), the role of AI in surveys (useful support but not a substitute today), the ingredients of national success (leadership and "sharing by default" policies), and data governance under the Global Digital Compact. He advocated nationally anchored governance and sovereignty over sensitive data as the foundation for effective cross-border collaboration.

Session Adapting digital development statistics to evolving policy priorities



Speakers

- Moderator: [Bernard Banda](#), Director for Economic Regulation and Consumer Protection, Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority
- Apolonija Oblak Flander, Director-General
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia; WTIS-25 Chair
- Min Suk Lee, Executive Director, Korea Information Society Development Institute
- Alvaro Díez Soto, Head of Unit, Eurostat

Summary

The session explored how digital development statistics can stay aligned with rapidly changing policy priorities. Bernard Banda framed the discussion around a dual challenge: policymakers demand statistics that are timely, reliable, and easy to use, while data producers seek recognition, resources, and assurance that their work informs real decisions. The debate focused on how to bridge these expectations, maintain policy relevance, and anticipate emerging demands.

Min Suk Lee emphasised that the true value of data lies not in raw streams but in their transformation into actionable insights. He cited Korea's pandemic response, where smartphone data enabled rapid contact tracing, and a map-based tool that visualised telecom poles, conduits, and buildings to make infrastructure sharing cost-effective. Research groups convened under his leadership bring together academics, businesses, and statisticians to decide which indicators to add, adapt, or retire. Dr. Lee illustrated this approach with a mobile-number forecasting project that tested nine models, allowing policymakers to plan calmly and adopt monthly monitoring and cross-

operator management rather than disruptive renumbering. Looking ahead, he highlighted that the availability of machine-readable, machine-understandable datasets will be decisive for the equitable use of AI in policymaking.

Álvaro Díez Soto described how the EU balances harmonisation with flexibility. ICT statistics are collected under regulation but treated as a dynamic domain: variables are negotiated annually with Member States and users; a model questionnaire and methodological manual ensure comparability; and optional modules are supported through grants. Challenges include limits on variables to reduce burden, the need to pilot new questions even as policymakers expect quick results and avoiding investment in short-lived hype. Mr. Díez Soto stressed the importance of working closely with policy departments, such as those behind the Digital Decade programme, and noted that official statistics are often the least disputed inputs in EU decision-making. Work is also underway to test smart surveys and to integrate alternative sources such as mobile operator data and smart meters.

Apolonija Oblak Flander explained how a 300-person office achieves global visibility and high performance. Her office links more than 200 administrative sources at micro level, publishes experimental statistics (e.g., on mobile networks and smart meters), and invests in communications and interviewer training to counter high non-response. Ms. Oblak Flander underlined the importance of visibility and trust to secure resources, active engagement in EU working groups, and outreach to universities to attract new talent. The office is piloting generative AI applications and convenes statistical committees that bring together data users and holders to shape priorities.

Questions from the floor covered user-generated data, household survey bias, interoperability across uneven systems, and the role of regulators and operators.

Emerging priorities included developing AI-ready data and indicators, expanding statistics on cybersecurity and environmental impacts, and capturing digital assets, data centres, cross-border flows, the API economy, and platforms as drivers of digital transformation.

Session Financing digital development statistics



Speakers

- Moderator: [Andrea Barone](#), Senior Economist, Digital Vice Presidency, World Bank
- [Anu Peltola](#), Chief Statistician, UNCTAD
- [Geoffrey So](#), Head of Strategic Engagement, WHO Foundation
- [Hasnae Fdhil](#), Director of Cooperation and Communication at the High Commission for Planning of Morocco

Summary

The moderator, Andrea Barone, emphasized that reliable ICT and digital development statistics are a prerequisite for evidence-based policymaking and for bridging the global digital divide. While the costs of producing statistics are modest compared to infrastructure investments, insufficient financing continues to constrain data availability, leaving many countries without the capacity to monitor connectivity and digital inclusion.

A global perspective by Anu Peltola underscored how data has become a political and developmental priority. Recent international frameworks, including the Pact for the Future, the [Global Digital Compact](#), and the outcomes of the [Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development](#), recognize data as a strategic asset for transparency, accountability, and effective governance. New initiatives, such as the Sevilla Platform for Action, are promoting sustainable financing strategies for statistical systems.

At the same time, practical lessons from other fields demonstrated the value of innovative funding

models. Geoffrey So of the [WHO Foundation](#) illustrated how an independent fundraising entity can complement a multilateral institution by diversifying resources, engaging private partners, and offering a platform for joint initiatives that combine financial contributions with expertise, technology, and outreach capacity. A similar approach was proposed as a potential model for mobilizing resources to strengthen ICT data collection globally.

From a national perspective, Morocco's experience, presented by Hasnae Fdhil, showed how combining public resources with external financing can strengthen resilience, enable innovation, and ensure timely responses to emerging needs. Linking funding requests directly to policy priorities has been essential to secure government support, while external partnerships have supported pilot projects, crisis-response surveys, and the adoption of new methods. Safeguards such as strict confidentiality protocols have ensured that cooperation with external partners does not compromise trust in official statistics. She recalled that while donor-funded projects can initiate new surveys or innovations, countries must eventually integrate these into regular national statistical programmes.

The key messages of the session are:

- Data is now a strategic asset for policy, governance, and digital transformation, requiring coordinated and sustained investment. Financing ICT statistics is essential and affordable yet remains underprioritized compared to infrastructure investments.
- Innovative funding models, such as foundation-based approaches, can attract diverse financing and complement public resources.
- National ownership is crucial: external financing should serve as a catalyst, but integration into national budgets and strategies ensures sustainability.
- Partnerships and governance matter: effective collaboration across governments, private sector, international organizations, and local authorities must be underpinned by trust, confidentiality, and clear value propositions.

Session Expanding horizons in digital development statistics: From satellites to sub-national insights and a Report from the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI)



Speakers

- Moderator: [Panayiotis Kyriakides](#), economist, Office of the Commissioner for Electronic Communications and Postal Regulation, Cyprus
- [Bernard Banda](#), Director, Economic Regulation, Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority, Zambia; EGTI Chair
- [Natalia Vicente](#), Vice President, Public Affairs, Global Satellite Operator's Association
- [Alan Ramírez García](#), Telecommunication Policy Consultant, Peru

Summary

Focusing on the goal of developing supply-side ICT indicators to support digital transformation policies, the session consisted of three main segments.

First, the chair of EGTI, Bernard Banda, [presented the group's activities over the past year](#). He highlighted that the 15th annual meeting of EGTI in September 2024 adopted a revision of ITU's ICT price data collection methodology. The revised price baskets reflect the increased data usage across the world and changing market landscape. He also discussed key ongoing discussions centred around the review of the ICT Development Index and the development of a methodology for country-level indicators helping to measure the environmental footprint of the ICT sector. He welcomed the collaborative working method of EGTI and the active participation of experts discussing topics of common interest.

Better measurement of satellite-based broadband connectivity is one of the next frontiers for global ICT indicators development. Bringing the industry perspective, Natalia Vicente [presented the evolving role of satellite technology in bridging digital and socio-economic divides](#). The presentation underscored the importance of multi-orbit systems—GEO, MEO, LEO, and HEO—in providing global coverage and fast deployment, and the challenges for measurement posed by new technologies allowing direct-to-device communication as well as the complementarities and competitions between connectivity providers. The speaker also noted that mobile broadband coverage, while reaches population's homes, remains geographically concentrated. Improved measurement should consider the potential use of satellite technology in various sectors as well as mobility settings. The speaker called for jointly defining how to measure what is meaningful and relevant for digital policies.

In the final segment, [the presentation of Alan Ramírez illustrated how sub-national data on universal and meaningful connectivity](#) can help in understanding, and ultimately, bridging the digital divide between urban and rural areas. Through the example of Peru, he stressed the need to establish and collect meaningful indicators to guide policy decisions and measure progress in achieving universal connectivity. Lastly, he emphasized the significance of both direct public funding and indirect pathways, such as incentives and regulatory mechanisms, to promote digital access in regions with pronounced connectivity divides.

The ensuing discussion highlighted the importance of not only developing regulatory frameworks for satellite connectivity but also having relevant data available. In short, granular, timely ICT indicators remain key for guiding policies.

Session Shaping the future of digital development household statistics: Measuring cybercrime and a report from the ITU Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH)



Speakers

- Moderator: [Winston Oyadomari](#), Research Analyst, CETIC.br, Brazil
- [Linah Ngumba](#), Head, ICT Statistics Section, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics; EGH Chair
- [David Rausis](#), Statistician, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- [Araceli Martínez Gama](#), Deputy Director General of Economic Surveys, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), Mexico

Winston Oyadomari set the stage by introducing the presenters and noting the need for ICT household statistics to evolve as policy needs change.

Linah Ngumba [outlined the mission and work methods of the EGH](#), which develops and reviews household ICT indicators and harmonized definitions in collaboration with EGTI. Key outcomes of the 12th EGH meeting (2024) included accepting the recommendations of the subgroup on ICT skills and closing the subgroup (though discussion remains open), extending the joint EGH-EGTI subgroup on the ICT Development Index (IDI), and launching a new subgroup on measuring AI use in household surveys. Country experiences shared by Côte d'Ivoire and The Gambia illustrated the benefits of close collaboration between national regulators and statistical offices, including embedding ICT questions in censuses as a cost-efficient strategy. Looking forward, EGH will refine AI use questions, support IDI revisions, and explore emerging topics such as e-waste, digital well-being, and cybercrime.

David Rausis [emphasized the importance of harmonized definitions for cybercrime](#). He described the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), which distinguishes between cyber-dependent crimes (e.g. hacking, malware) and cyber-enabled crimes (e.g. fraud, harassment using ICTs). UNODC has developed victimization survey modules to capture hidden figures of crime not reported to authorities, focusing on experiences such as email hacking, ransomware, or identity theft. Challenges include differing legal definitions, under-representation of children, fast-changing digital threats, and victims reporting incidents to platforms rather than authorities. A new UN Convention against Cybercrime (2024) is expected to strengthen global harmonization, and UNODC has begun work on a statistical framework to support this.

Araceli Martínez Gama [presented results](#) from Mexico's annual ICT household survey (ENDUTIH) and its Cyberbullying Module (MOCIBA). ENDUTIH is a large-scale household survey which has been collecting data since 2015 on ICT access and use in Mexico. MOCIBA - its cyberbullying module - has been conducted annually as official statistics since 2019. In 2024, about 21% of internet users aged 12+ reported experiencing cyberbullying, with young women most affected. Common forms included offensive messages, false identities, and sexual proposals, often occurring via WhatsApp or Facebook. Victims reported anger, mistrust, or fear; women were disproportionately affected. The module also assessed digital security practices (e.g. password use, antivirus software). Results provide disaggregated insights by gender, age, and state, supporting targeted policies.

The session underlined the importance of harmonized frameworks, innovative survey approaches, and cross-country collaboration to measure cybercrime and broader ICT use. It also showcased EGH's expanding agenda, including AI use and digital well-being, as critical frontiers for household ICT statistics.

Session Beyond access: Measuring digital well-being for all

Speakers

- Moderator: [Farah Paredes Viera](#), Head, Design and Analysis Division, National Office of Statistics, Dominican Republic
- [Žiga Žarnić](#), Head of Digital Well-being and SDGs Analytics, OECD WISE Centre
- [Romina Cachia](#), Scientific Team Leader, Digital Economy Unit, Joint Research Centre, European Commission
- [Clara Centeno](#), Researcher, Joint Research Centre, European Commission
- [Sonia Livingstone](#), Professor, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

Farah Paredes Viera introduced the presenters and highlighted the importance of recognizing and addressing safety online and the need to attend the potential risks associated with access. As the benefits and the risks of connectivity are amplified in an increasingly connected world, measuring digital well-being is more important than ever.

Žiga Žarnić [presented the OECD-Cisco Digital Well-being Hub](#), a global crowdsourcing and research platform. The Hub's poll collects high-frequency, representative data from 14 countries on how people perceive technology's effects on their lives. Findings show mixed impacts: while 39% of respondents felt digital tools strengthened their closest relationships, prolonged screen time (>5 hours/day) is linked to lower mental well-being and life satisfaction, especially among youth, unemployed people, and students. Gender differences are modest, though women report slightly more recreational screen time. Žarnić stressed the need for timely, comparable, and high-resolution data to understand both opportunities and risks, including the evolving role of generative AI.

Romina Cachia and Clara Centeno [presented JRC's study](#) using 2022 PISA data to analyse links

between social media use and self-reported mental health. Results show that 96% of 15-year-olds use social media daily, with 37% spending more than three hours per day online. Heavy use correlates with higher risk of anxiety and depression, while moderate use – defined as less than two hours per day – is linked with greater social support and civic engagement. Girls are more likely than boys to spend over three hours online and to report poor mental health outcomes. Adolescents generally oppose blanket technology bans but support collaborative rulemaking in schools. Policy implications include curbing addictive design, promoting digital literacy, training parents and teachers, and developing gender-sensitive approaches.

Sonia Livingstone [presented updates](#) from the Global Kids Online's "One in Three" initiative, highlighting that one in three internet users globally is a child. Drawing on data from over 42,000 children in 36 countries, the research showed widespread exposure to online risks such as hate speech and violent content. She outlined a framework for measuring children's digital lives, including access, barriers, skills, activities, risks, harms, and coping strategies. The research emphasizes the scarcity of comparable cross-country data on children, and the need for regular updates to reflect evolving platforms, devices, and risks.

The session demonstrated that digital well-being is a multidimensional challenge, intersecting with mental health, education, social participation, and child protection. It highlighted innovative measurement initiatives by OECD, JRC, and child-focused networks, while underscoring the urgent need for systematic, globally comparable data to inform balanced policies that maximize opportunities while mitigating risks.

Information session ITU@Work: ITU DataHub and Data Hackathon



Summary

During this off-programme session, ITU staff presented [the work of the ICT Data and Analytics Division](#), which spans the full data lifecycle, with a particular focus on data dissemination. The team showcased the [ITU DataHub](#), highlighting recent updates and upcoming features for 2025, including customizable country profiles, a thematic dashboard for ICT price baskets, new indicators, enhanced data visualizations, more disaggregated data, and an AI-powered chatbot.

A live demonstration illustrated the platform's main functionalities, followed by a preview of the chatbot prototype. This tool will respond to queries on all aspects of ITU's statistical work, drawing on the DataHub's datasets as well as methodological guides, analytical publications, workshop materials, event reports, and other resources. A beta version will be released in late 2025 and progressively improved throughout 2026.

In the second part of the session, ITU staff introduced the upcoming Data Hackathon, organized in collaboration with the ITU Area Office for South Asia and the ITU Innovation Centre. The initiative aims to harness the creativity of data-science teams to "Uncover Digital Deserts" by combining and analysing diverse data sources. An online phase will run until April 2026, after which shortlisted teams will gather in New Delhi. Member States and Academia members will receive logistical and technical information through a circular letter to be issued in October 2025.

Session Broadening the scope: Monitoring global digital commitments - Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development

Speakers

- Moderator: [Scarlett Fondeur-Gil](#), Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD
- [Esperanza Magpantay](#), Senior Statistician, ITU
- [Michael Frosch](#), Senior Statistician, ILO
- [Álvaro Diez Soto](#), Head of Unit, Eurostat
- [Oliver Lysaght](#), UNITAR SCYCLE - remote
- [Deniz Susar](#), Governance and Public Administration Officer, UNDESA - remote

Summary

The Partnership session, moderated by Scarlett Fondeur Gil of UNCTAD, highlighted how [international agencies are working together](#) to strengthen the measurement of ICT for development. She highlighted that the Partnership serves as the main coordination mechanism for ICT statistics across 14 agencies. She outlined UNCTAD's contributions through research and analysis such as the Digital Economy Report and its statistical website, consensus-building through working groups on e-commerce and the digital economy, and technical assistance in capacity-building and advisory services.

Esperanza Magpantay of ITU presented the [Partnership's work on mapping ICT core indicators](#) against the WSIS Action Lines, UMC, and the Global Digital Compact (GDC). This exercise aims to identify gaps, particularly in areas such as artificial intelligence, governance, employment, and security. She mentioned that the ITU DataHub will include data for the Partnership indicators and stressed the importance of continued advocacy for financing ICT statistics, building on commitments made in the Sevilla Action Plan.

Michael Frosch of the ILO presented new [developments in labour statistics](#), particularly in measuring digital platform employment. He highlighted ILO's capacity to use microdata from ILOSTAT to generate ICT-related labour indicators, such as the proportion of employed persons in the ICT sector. These indicators could be produced regularly for many countries and would provide valuable insights into ICT's role in job creation and economic development.

Álvaro Diez Soto from Eurostat highlighted the challenge of [measuring artificial intelligence](#). He explained that Eurostat introduced an AI module

in enterprise surveys in 2021 and will release household-level data in 2025. The indicators cover the use, purpose, and acquisition of AI, reasons for non-use, and safeguards to ensure responsible AI. He underlined the difficulties of capturing such a fast-changing field, from definitional ambiguity and rapid technological shifts to designing clear, relevant survey questions that can measure both usage and social impact.

Oliver Lysaght of UNITAR SCYCLE presented ongoing work to [update the Global E-waste Statistics Guidelines](#). The third edition, currently under pilot testing in Kenya, Jamaica, and Thailand, incorporates updated classifications of electronic goods, revised product lifespans and material composition, and new methodologies to measure e-waste flows. With global e-waste reaching 62 million tons in 2022, he stressed the urgency of reliable and comparable data to inform national and global policy responses.

Deniz Susar of UNDESA, through a recorded video, provided an [update on the WSIS+20 review](#) process. He noted that the UN General Assembly's Zero Draft recognizes the importance of ICT statistics, commends the Partnership's work, and calls for strengthened international cooperation to close data gaps. The draft also tasks the Partnership with reviewing existing indicators and methodologies in 2026, with a consolidated progress report expected in 2027, both to be reported to the sessions of the CSTD.

Delegates raised questions on the use of qualitative indicators, national coordination, data discrepancies, and participation in expert groups. The panel explained that the core indicators remain quantitative for comparability, highlighted the need for collaboration across statistical systems, clarified ITU's use of UN population data to ensure comparability, and outlined how to join expert groups. In conclusion, the session confirmed the central role of the Partnership in coordinating work on ICT statistics globally, while underscoring the continuing challenges of addressing data gaps, securing financing and capacity-building, and adapting measurement to fast-changing technologies such as AI. The upcoming WSIS+20 review is expected to further solidify the Partnership's mandate in supporting evidence-based digital development.

Session Scaling use of mobile phone data for official statistics



Speakers

- Moderator: [Nor Azhar Hassan](#), Head, Industry Research and Data Analytics Division, MCMC Malaysia
- [Trevor Monroe](#), Senior Program Manager, World Bank
- [Daniel Power](#), Managing Director Flowminder
- [Paul Hamilton](#) and Chris Emberson, GIS Experts, ITU

Summary

The session, moderated by Nor Azhar Hassan (MCMC, Malaysia), featured Malaysia's experience with MPD implementation. Launched in 2023 under a government mandate, the country progressed from city-level pilots to nationwide coverage using ITU algorithms. Malaysia is now compiling data from all operators and plans to release its first official MPD statistics in early 2026.

Trevor Monroe presented the [Mobile Phone Data for Policy programme](#), a partnership with ITU and Spain, and funded by the Global Data Facility. He outlined how MPD is being applied in tourism statistics, transport planning, poverty mapping, the information society, and disaster response. He highlighted its cost-effectiveness, higher frequency and granularity compared to surveys, and the need for sustainable pipelines, public-private partnerships, and integration into national data systems. He reported that the first cohort of 18 countries, launched in 2024, is completing its first year and producing initial outputs in tourism, transport, and population mapping. The second cohort, launched with SADC, follows an 18-month schedule aligned with World Bank operations. Future third and fourth cohorts (2026–2029) will scale successful models, expand use cases, and

strengthen data systems. He added that countries are also developing information society use cases to assess Internet usage and emphasized that all countries can join the initiative and benefit from open training materials, guidelines, and technical support.

Daniel Power introduced two programmatic design tools: the [Theory of Change and the Maturity Assessment Framework](#). He explained that the theory of change provides a clear causal pathway from stakeholder engagement to the integration of MPD in official statistics, while the maturity framework serves as a diagnostic tool that allows countries to assess their progress across stages ranging from pre-foundation to expert. He stressed the central role of regulators, the need to align incentives between mobile operators and government agencies, and the importance of building technical and institutional capacity for sustainable use of MPD.

Paul Hamilton and Chris Emberson (ITU GIS experts), presented their work on [Early Warning Connectivity Maps as part of the UN's "Early Warnings for All" initiative](#). They showed how combining mobile coverage, population, and hazard maps can reveal disaster-prone communities lacking connectivity. Using Madagascar as an example, they identified millions at cyclone risk without access to alerts. The approach supports targeted investments to expand coverage, improve networks, or use alternatives like satellite, radio, or community alerts.

Countries raised questions on incentives for data sharing, 2G/3G shutdowns, NSO capacity, privacy, participation in future cohorts, and filtering non-human SIMs. Speakers stressed the need for tailored data agreements, combining MPD with surveys for better representativeness, and applying anonymization and aggregation to protect privacy.

The session concluded by underscoring how MPD has evolved from pilot projects into a mature policy tool. With global frameworks, shared methodologies, and the support of international partnerships, MPD now stands as a vital resource for advancing statistical capacity, including for information society statistics to ensure inclusive digital development.

WTIS-25 Closing



Speakers

- [Archana G. Gulati](#), Deputy to the BDT Director, ITU
- [Apolonija Oblak Flander](#), Director-General, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia; WTIS-25 Chair

Summary

The closing of WTIS-25 highlighted both the achievements of the symposium and the challenges that lie ahead. Delivering remarks on behalf of the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, Archana Gulati reflected on the enthusiasm captured in the Mentimeter poll (see next page). She underlined the central message emerging from the symposium: better data leads to better policy. From the keynote to the sessions on big data and mobile statistics, discussions confirmed the vital role of data in shaping ICT policies and measuring progress.

Ms. Gulati stressed that WTIS is the starting point of the data journey, with its debates feeding directly into the work of ITU's expert groups, which were scheduled to meet immediately after the symposium. She pointed to two urgent issues—artificial intelligence and digital well-being—where frameworks are still nascent. Financing statistics

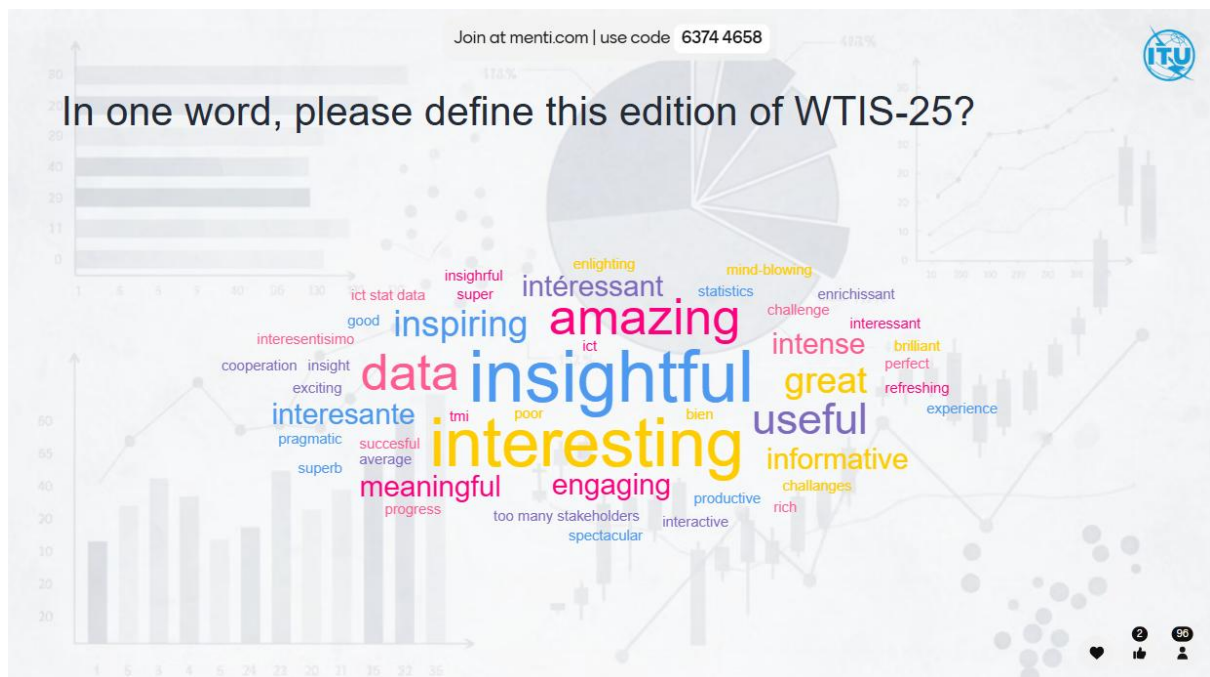
was another recurrent theme, echoing ITU's call to the G20 that even a small share of development financing dedicated to measurement yields significant dividends. She further noted the strong link between WTIS-25 and the Global Digital Compact, which calls for investment in data ecosystems and digital inclusion surveys, and thanked the many speakers and participants for their contributions.

In her own remarks, Apolonija Oblak Flander, Chair of WTIS-25, invoked the African proverb: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." She praised the collaborative spirit of the symposium, emphasising how WTIS had provided a platform to exchange experiences, update, and prioritise indicators, explore alternative data sources, and align measurement frameworks with global agendas such as the SDGs and the Compact.

Ms. Oblak Flander also looked ahead, noting that monitoring the digital society will involve measuring emerging areas such as AI, cybercrime, digital skills, mental health, platform work, and e-waste. She underlined the need to integrate new methods and alternative sources while safeguarding quality, trust, and inclusiveness. In a world awash with data, she stressed, statistical offices must retain their role as trusted partners for evidence-based policymaking. Agility and vigilance will be essential to ensure that measurement keeps pace with technology and continues to address what matters most for societies, economies, and environmental sustainability.

She concluded by encouraging experts to carry the momentum into the upcoming meetings of the ITU's Expert Groups on ICT Indicators, EGTI and EGH, thanking interpreters and participants, and reminding everyone that sustainable progress depends on working together.

Results of the Mentimeter poll "In one word, please define this edition of WTIS-25".



Based on 96 responses.



Thank you to all WITS-25 participants!



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