

**Document RPM-AMS25/INF/5-E  
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English only**

**Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau**

**Presentation of State of digital development and trends in the Americas Region:  
Challenges and opportunities**

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# ITUWDC

## BAKU2025

### REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING AMERICAS

1-2 April 2025

Asunción, Paraguay



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# Document 3



## Informing the WTDC-25 preparatory process

- The “State of Digital Development and Trends” RPM documents and reports inform participants and stakeholders as they discuss regional digital agendas in the lead up of WTDC-25.
- Each report consists of two parts: the first provides an overview of the state of digital connectivity in the region, and the second showcases case studies.





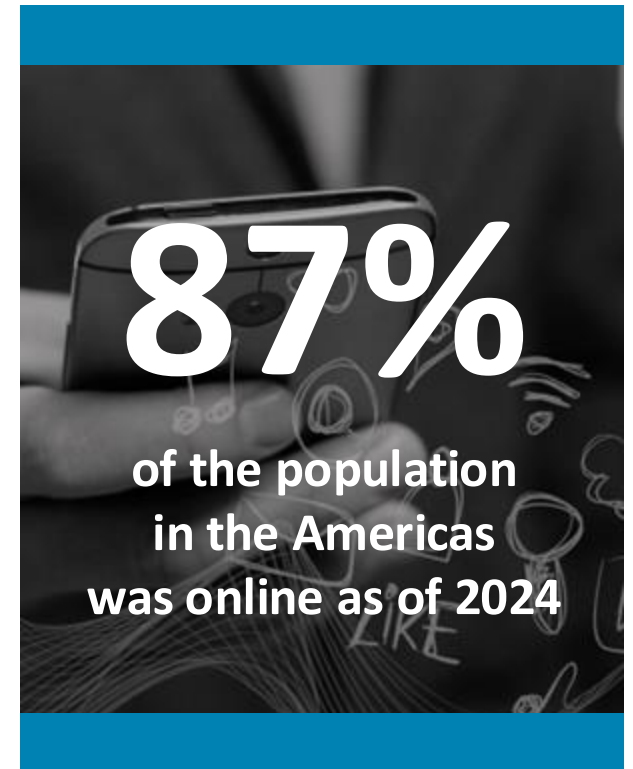
## Universal and meaningful connectivity: a policy imperative

- Universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC) is a policy imperative to fully leverage the potential of connectivity. It is a requirement for enabling digital transformation.
- UMC enables everyone to enjoy a safe, enriching, and productive online experience at an affordable cost.
- UMC does not mean everyone must be connected all the time but describes a situation where everyone can access the Internet optimally and affordably whenever and wherever needed.



## The Americas: universal access within reach, amidst progress

- Universal broadband access almost achieved : 96% of population covered by 3G (63% by 5G).
- Almost 9 in 10 people use the Internet, well above global average (68%).
- 95% of people aged 15–24 are online.
- Only region where more women than men are online!



## Connectivity gaps persist within and across countries

- Internet use varies widely, from 56% to 95%, reflecting stark country-level inequalities.
- 5G is available in only 9 out of 35 countries.
- Fixed broadband subscriptions range from less than 1 to over 47 per 100 inhabitants.
- Urban-rural Internet use gap stands at 16 percentage points: 90% in urban vs. 74% in rural areas.



## Affordability is still a barrier to UMC in the Americas



- Median price of entry-level mobile broadband amounts to 1.8% of GNI per capita, just below UN Broadband Commission 2% affordability target, but above the global median of 1.1%.
- 16 out of 35 countries still exceed the 2% affordability threshold for mobile broadband.
- Fixed broadband remains unaffordable in most countries, with a median cost of 3.2% of GNI per capita, with only 5 countries meeting the 2% target.



## ICT regulation: where it all begins

- Over the past 15 years, ICT regulation has improved across the Americas.
- However, regulatory evolution in the region has slowed drastically since 2015, with very few countries graduating to a higher generation.
- Today, 23 countries have adopted advanced regulatory frameworks (rated as “G3” or “G4”, the most advanced) in ITU ICT Regulatory Tracker. Two countries remain in G1.
- SIDS and LLDCs need stronger institutions and better integration into regional frameworks.



## Cybersecurity, e-waste, and sustainability



- Cybersecurity readiness is uneven. The region's average score in the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 was 53 out of 100, with country scores ranging from 18.2 to 99.9.
- The region generated 14.3B kg of e-waste generated in the Americas in 2022, accounting 23% of global total.
- 30% of it was properly recycled, above the global average (22%), but well below Europe's rate (46%).
- 20 countries reports having formal e-waste collection systems, but implementation varies.

## BDT4Impact: Featured case studies (1)

- **Guatemala**: Indigenous and rural leaders were trained to build and manage ICT networks in their communities.
- **Dominican Republic** : New e-waste regulations, developed with ITU support, were adopted to protect health and promote sustainable digital growth.
- **Paraguay**: An ITU project is supporting the development of new legal framework to manage e-waste and foster circular economy.





## BDT4Impact: Featured case studies (2)

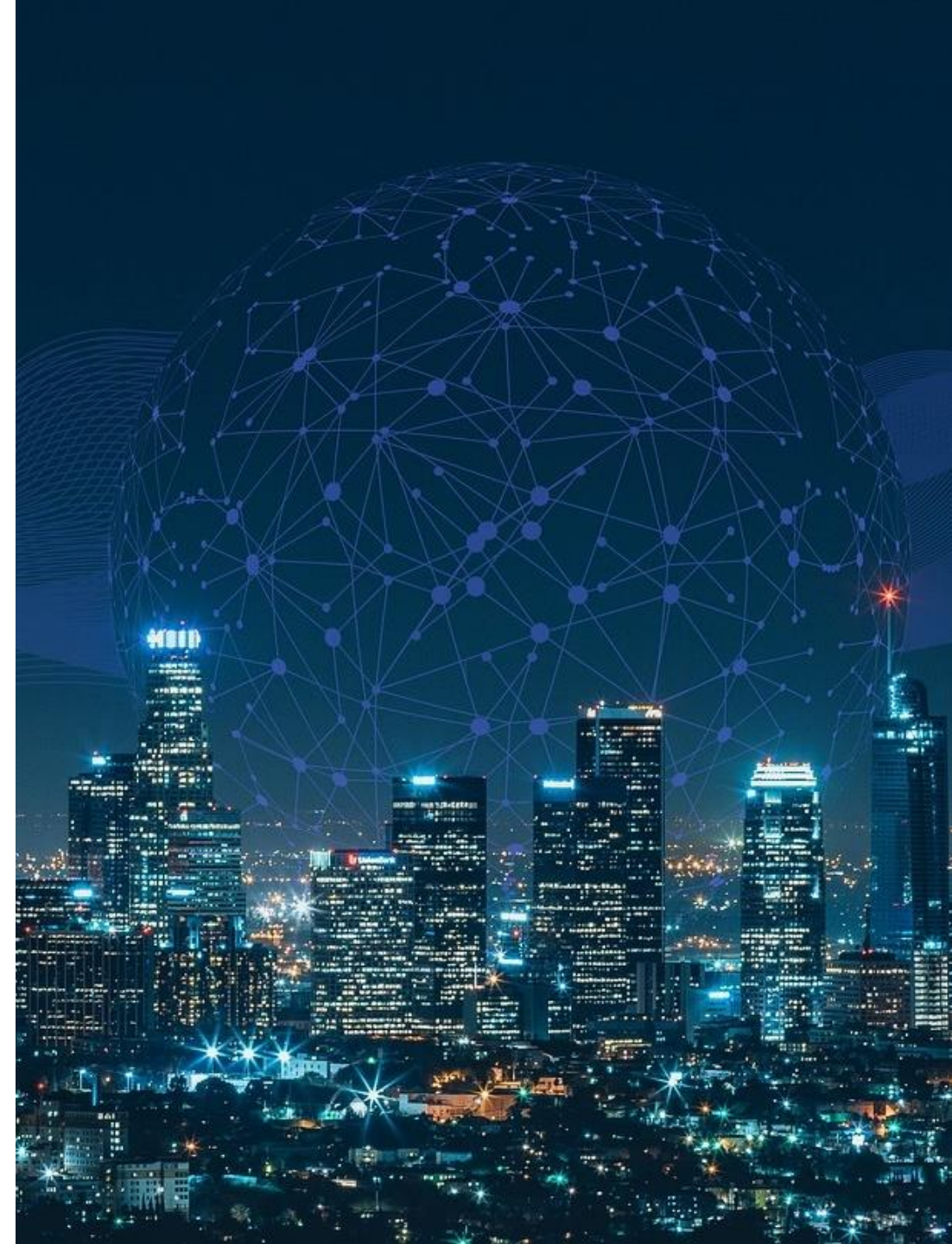
- **Caribbean:**
  - The Smart Seas Project supports small-scale fishers with digital tools for maritime safety and disaster resilience.
  - ITU supported emergency telecoms deployment to restore connectivity after Hurricane Beryl.
- **Argentina:** the “Girls Can Code” event builds digital skills and career awareness among young women.
- **Uruguay:** a national broadband mapping system helps guide infrastructure planning and investment.





## The road ahead in the Americas: Some considerations

- Expand rural connectivity and strengthen fixed broadband infrastructure.
- Improve affordability—especially for underserved groups and remote areas.
- Invest in digital skills and literacy to empower meaningful participation.
- Strengthen national data systems to support evidence-based policymaking.



## Risks and challenges in a hyperconnected region

- Risks of hyper connectivity are growing: cybersecurity threats, disinformation, AI misuse, addiction...
- Cybersecurity and data privacy threats outpace current regulatory responses in many countries.
- E-waste and energy use continue to climb, straining environmental sustainability.
- Regulatory fragmentation risks deepening divides between advanced and lagging countries.



# Thank you!

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More information:

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