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| Note by the secretariat | |
| CONTRIBUTION BY THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ITU/UNESCO BROADBAND COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT | |
| **Purpose**  The objective of this document is to provide information on the ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development Annual Report – The State of Broadband 2024 titled “Leveraging AI for Universal Connectivity”.  **Action required**  This report is transmitted to the Council Working Group on WSIS and the SDGs **for information**.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [*CWG-WSIS&SDG website*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Pages/default.aspx)*; The State of Broadband Report 2024:* [*https://www.broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2024/*](https://www.broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2024/)*; 7 Advocacy Targets 2025:* [*https://www.broadbandcommission.org/advocacy-targets/*](https://www.broadbandcommission.org/advocacy-targets/)*; The Commission at a Glance:* [*https://broadbandcommission.org/about-us/*](https://broadbandcommission.org/about-us/) | |

Overview

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development was established in 2010 by ITU and UNESCO with the aim of boosting the importance of broadband on the international policy agenda and expanding broadband access in every country as key to accelerating progress towards national and international development targets. Led by H.E. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Mr Carlos Slim Helú of Mexico, it is co-chaired by ITU’s Secretary-General, Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, and UNESCO Director-General, Ms Audrey Azoulay. It comprises over 50 Commissioners who represent a cross-cutting group of top CEO and industry leaders, senior policymakers and government representatives, and experts from international agencies, academia and organizations concerned with development.

The advocacy and thought leadership

The Commission leverages the strength of its membership and collective expertise to advocate for meaningful, safe, secure, and sustainable broadband communications services as a foundational element to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Since 2010, the Commission published its annual, collaborative 'State of Broadband’ report and almost forty working groups on thematic areas from health, education and gender equality were established. The Commission made also recommendations for reaching universal broadband connectivity.

The Commission has also been instrumental in launching a number of global initiatives (EQUALS, Giga, etc.) and advocating with its educational campaigns (MSMEs day, SDG Digital etc.), events (WSIS, STI Forum, LDC5, UNCTAD e-week etc.) and inputs to the UN processes.

The State of Broadband Annual Report

Every year, the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development publishes its flagship [annual 'State of Broadband’ report](https://broadbandcommission.org/state-of-broadband-archive/) providing a unique, global snapshot of global progress on reaching universal connectivity. Written through a collaborative framework and drawing on the insights of the Commission’s high-level, multistakeholder membership, the report provides input on the most pertinent issues facing broadband development; updates on the 2025 Broadband Advocacy Targets; and insights and impact stories from Commissioners.

This year’s edition of the [State of Broadband series, titled “Leveraging AI for Universal Connectivity”](https://www.broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2024/), will be delivered in two parts. The Commission released in June the first part of the report which offered an initial overview of how AI applications are already shaping development across various fields such as e-government, education, digital health, digital finance, and the environment, while also addressing associated risks and implications for the digital divide and the Commission’s 2025 Advocacy Targets

Key messages

– The Commission views AI as a potential accelerant towards sustainable development goals, highlighting the need for further exploration into AI’s potential impact and issues.

– Policy-making in relation to AI is rapidly evolving, with countries and regions beginning to establish guidelines or regulations to balance AI's benefits against its risks, although comprehensive policy responses by a large number of countries and normative recommendations are still under development.

– There is a number of initiatives underway to explore and implement AI by a number of separate Commissioner organizations and companies, and the report presents some of these initiatives.

– AI is transforming economic activities, sectors, and various aspects of life, presenting both advantages like efficiency and speed, and challenges such as increased energy consumption and the reinforcement of biases.

– Despite substantive progress in some areas, the Broadband Commission’s targets have still not been achieved.

The State of Broadband will provide recommendations on ways to achieve the Commission's advocacy targets.

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