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| **18 August 2025** |
| **English only** |
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Compilation of responses to the Online Open Consultation   
(March – August 2025)

Following the instructions of [Council Resolution 1336 (Mod. 2019)](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0140/en), the 21st session of the Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues (CWG-Internet) launched an open consultation (online and physical) on the following topic:

**Ensuring meaningful connectivity to the Internet for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)**

1 What strategies can be adopted to ensure meaningful connectivity to the Internet for LLDCs?

2 What unique challenges do LLDCs face in attaining meaningful connectivity to the Internet, and what specific policies and measures can be taken, in particular, regarding the following:

– affordability

– quality of bandwidth or communications

– investment

– infrastructure

– enabling environment

– security and resilience.

3 What can ITU Membership, governments and other stakeholders, including those from transit countries, do to ensure meaningful connectivity to the Internet for LLDCs?"

A compilation of the responses received is set out below.

*NOTE:* Please note that due to the different formats used by the online respondents:

– Inputs to the “Comment box” of the online form —serving either as sole contribution, summary or comment— have been copied and pasted;

– When available, indicated summaries have been copied and pasted;

– Where relevant, summaries sent through email have been copied and pasted;

– Unless a summary is submitted, documents of up to 1 000 words have been copied and pasted, as well as hyperlinked. Longer documents have been hyperlinked only;

– Footnotes found in the submitted documents were not included in the present document.

|  | Date | Submitter (contributions hyperlinked) | Response |
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| **1.** | 5 August 2025 | [CONATEL](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-mar2025.aspx?ListItemID=6) | **Summary provided in the comment box:**  The document analyzes the evolution of international commitments related to ensuring meaningful Internet connectivity in Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). It highlights that, although the importance of connectivity was recognized as early as 2003 in forums such as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), early action plans specific to LLDCs did not prioritize ICT infrastructure. It was not until the Vienna Conference in 2014 and the Awaza Conference in 2025 that more concrete measures were included to address infrastructure gaps and access disparities, including gender-based digital divides. Paraguay is presented as a case study illustrating efforts at multilateral, regional, bilateral, and national levels to improve international Internet connectivity. Key initiatives include the promotion of regional connectivity forums, agreements with Brazil and Argentina, the implementation of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), and the reduction of international Internet connectivity costs. Despite these advancements, challenges persist, such as low fixed broadband penetration, high internal connectivity costs, and a fragmented regulatory framework. Paraguay’s National Telecommunications Plan 2021-2025 includes initiatives aimed at expanding coverage and fostering local-level partnerships. Finally, the document proposes a series of strategic recommendations to overcome existing barriers. These include the development of integrated regional digital infrastructure, cross-border cooperation, open access and competitive regulatory policies, investment in wireless and satellite technologies, and the strengthening of digital skills and human capacity. Specific challenges are identified in areas such as affordability, service quality, investment, infrastructure, enabling environment, and cybersecurity—each accompanied by policy recommendations aligned with international standards. The active engagement of governments, transit countries, international organizations, and the private sector is deemed essential to achieve sustainable and inclusive connectivity. |
| **2.** | 6 August 2025 | [Italy](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-mar2025.aspx?ListItemID=7) | **Summary provided in the comment box:**  Digital connectivity represents a concrete opportunity for economic and social transformation for LLDCs that address geographic and structural constraints related to landforms and lack of sea access routes limiting international transportation and infrastructure maintenance, making these countries dependent on neighboring countries. It is important to arrest the isolation of LLDCs by eliminating communication constraints, problems related to long distances to be traveled in the almost complete absence of standoff infrastructure and adequate commercial routes, simplify transit and customs procedures, and encourage the implementation of new technologies for the creation and conversion of digital services (online trade, new distribution networks, work optimization, improved and continuous logistics control, transportation control through advanced tracking and management systems, and significant reduction of transportation and import/export costs). It is crucial to involve the population in the digital transformation process improving the people's digital skills and access to digital services and devices to stop the “usage gap”. In LLDCs, border territories often have lack of urbanization and the absence of suitable infrastructure, making it impossible to have safe trade routes. The digital exclusion of developing countries is often due to geopolitical vulnerabilities to neighboring countries, lack of digital infrastructure, lack of transparency in policies with neighboring countries, lack of access to technological innovations and absence of regulatory frameworks. The use of low-altitude earth-orbiting satellite networks can be a solution to the lack of connectivity in areas not currently reached by broadband and an important component for national resilience and meaningful connectivity (even during the disruption of other technologies) but requires more expensive receiving device, private installation of antennas and special infrastructure (Networking Operations Center). |
| **3** | 7 August 2025 | [ISOC Comoros Chapter](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-mar2025.aspx?ListItemID=8) | **Summary provided in the comment box:**  This contribution highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in achieving meaningful Internet connectivity, including high bandwidth demands, infrastructure renewal pressures in low-income contexts, data sovereignty risks with AI, and economic imbalances with global platforms. The contribution advocates for fair access to international gateways, investment in edge computing and localized AI models, harmonized regulatory frameworks, and capacity-building for local network and data professionals. It emphasizes the need for digital sovereignty, equitable value distribution, and inclusive governance to ensure that LLDCs are not left behind in the global digital transformation. |
| **4** | 7 August 2025 | [Uganda Communications Commission](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-mar2025.aspx?ListItemID=10) | **Summary provided in the comment box:**  The contribution highlights and addresses the complex barriers that Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) face in achieving meaningful internet connectivity, using Uganda as a case study. It emphasizes how the lack of direct access to submarine cables forces LLDCs to rely on transit through neighboring coastal countries, resulting in high wholesale and retail data costs, increased latency, service disruptions, and infrastructure vulnerabilities. The submission outlines detailed policy recommendations across key focus areas including affordability, quality of bandwidth, investment, infrastructure, enabling environment, and cybersecurity. Strategies include regulatory harmonization, infrastructure sharing, regional integration through bodies like the East African Community (EAC), public-private partnerships, and innovative technologies such as hybrid satellite-radio systems. The contribution also advocates for domestic backbone expansion, device affordability through financing schemes, and investment in digital literacy and local content. It concludes with clear roles for stakeholders: the ITU is urged to prioritize LLDCs in global digital agendas, LLDC governments to foster enabling environments, transit countries to ensure open and fair access, and the private sector, civil society, and development partners to co-invest and champion inclusive connectivity. |
| **5** | 8 August 2025 | [Internet Society](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-mar2025.aspx?ListItemID=11) | **Summary provided in the comment box:**  Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) face unique challenges to achieving meaningful connectivity due to the lack of direct access to subsea cables and dependence of access on neighboring countries, which can increase costs, reduce connectivity quality, and hamper resilience. To address these challenges, Internet access policies and strategies must go beyond basic access and focus on ensuring availability, affordability, resilience, and local technical knowledge. Enhancing domestic connectivity through high-capacity, resilient fiber backbones, especially at border crossings, and fostering local content development and access via Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) and data centers are the key to ensuring not only the expansion of infrastructure and quality of communications, but also affordability, security, and resilience. These efforts should be facilitated by technical capacity-building, developing local expertise, and promoting digital literacy and skills for users. For building and sustaining meaningful connectivity, governments should create an enabling environment by removing regulatory barriers and promoting investment and competition. It is crucial to include non-governmental stakeholders, especially the technical community, academia, and civil society, in key decision-making processes to guarantee informed policy strategies that cater to the specific local needs of a particular LLDC. |
| **6** | 9 August 2025 | [Derechos Digitales](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-mar2025.aspx?ListItemID=12) | **Summary provided in the contribution:**  Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) face unique challenges and structural barriers to achieving meaningful connectivity. In the Americas, only two countries are classified as LLDCs, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Republic of Paraguay. Both nations face multidimensional connectivity challenges resulting from their geographic location and socio-economic context. These obstacles intersect with broader regional connectivity issues prevalent across Latin America, including low digital literacy rates, persistent gender digital divides, uneven internet access distribution, significant urban-rural disparities, and high broadband costs.  In this joint contribution, we argue that meaningful connectivity is an enabler for the exercise of human rights such as freedom of expression, association, education, health, among others.  Therefore, we begin by contextualizing connectivity in Paraguay and Bolivia as the Americas' only LLDCs. Then, we highlight a set of human rights-aligned strategies to achieve meaningful connectivity through three key areas: net neutrality vs zero rating; protection and strengthening of community networks and other initiatives to internet access in remote areas; and Intersectional digital literacy strategies. We address challenges in achieving connectivity alongside measures that could be taken and policies that could be shaped to tackle them. And finally, we propose human rights-based recommendations for advancing meaningful connectivity in Bolivia and Paraguay, advocating that, when anchored in social justice and human rights principles, connectivity policies can transcend technical metrics like broadband speed and stability to also actively incorporate inclusion imperatives like affordability, digital literacy, and multilingualism. |
| **7** | 12 August 2025 | [Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-mar2025.aspx?ListItemID=13) | **Summary provided in the comment box:**  Malaysia’s contribution to the ITU CWG-Internet consultation highlights a multi-dimensional strategy to support Landlocked Developing Countries (“LLDCs”) in achieving meaningful Internet connectivity. It emphasises the persistent structural and policy challenges that hinder digital inclusion, such as limited infrastructure, affordability constraints, and gaps in institutional capacity. These issues are particularly pronounced in remote and underserved areas, where access remains sparse or unreliable. Malaysia underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that includes effective governance, sustainable investment models, cross-border cooperation, and inclusive regulatory frameworks. Malaysia advocates for capacity-building, policy innovation, and infrastructure development, both terrestrial and non-terrestrial, as essential components in bridging the connectivity divide and supporting equitable digital transformation in LLDCs. |

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