

RESOLUTION 131 (REV. BUCHAREST, 2022)

Measuring information and communication technologies to build an integrating and inclusive information society

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Bucharest, 2022),

recalling

a) Resolutions 139, 140, 175, 179, 180 and 198 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference, in relation to ITU's role in producing comprehensive statistics in the domain of telecommunication/information and communication technologies (ICTs);

b) Resolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference, on the strategic plan for the Union for 2024-2027, and Resolution 200 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference, on the Connect 2030 Agenda for global telecommunication/ICT, including broadband, for sustainable development, which approved strategic targets and indicators to monitor the development of ICTs and their support to the digital economy, and established a comprehensive linkage between the strategic goals of ITU and the targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

c) Resolution 8 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on collection and dissemination of information and statistics,

taking into account

a) the critical importance of telecommunication/ICT tools as a driver for economic and social development for all countries;

- b) the urgent need for national telecommunication/ICT plans and policies for empowering people and achieving the welfare of societies;
- c) the pressing need to have telecommunication/ICT access and usage measurements to monitor usage among all citizens in all countries, with special consideration for residents of remote areas,

aware

- a) that technological innovation, digitalization and telecommunications/ICTs have the potential to help achieve the SDGs, and to create new opportunities, while contributing to short- and long-term socio-economic development, including the digital economy, building towards an inclusive information society;
- b) that each Member State is seeking to establish its own policies and regulatory frameworks based on telecommunication/ICT statistical data in order to narrow as effectively as possible the digital divide between those who have access to communication and information and those who do not;
- c) that ensuring the integrity, consistency and relevance of ITU's statistics function is one of the Union's highest strategic priorities;
- d) that the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), through Resolution 70/1, approved 17 SDGs with 169 associated targets which are integrated and indivisible;
- e) that UNGA Resolution 70/125, on the outcome document of the UNGA high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), highlights the cross-cutting contribution of ICT to the SDGs and poverty eradication, acknowledges the importance of data and statistics to support ICT for development, and calls for further quantitative data to support evidence-based decision-making;
- f) that UNGA Resolution 71/313 established 231 indicators to measure the achievement of the 17 SDGs, and that seven of the 231 indicators are under the custody and monitoring of ITU,

recognizing

- a) that the WSIS outcomes referred to in *aware e)* above represented an opportunity to identify a global strategy for narrowing the digital divide in different spheres of activity and social sectors at the international and national levels (including the digital divide between regions, between countries and parts of countries, and between urban and rural areas), in the interests of development;
- b) that the outcome of the global Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, including ITU (represented by the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D)) and key stakeholders, has resulted in agreement on the identification of a set of basic indicators and a methodological framework for producing internationally comparable data for the measurement of telecommunications/ICT for development, as called for by § 115 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society;
- c) that there will be a continuing need to help developing countries¹ in telecommunication/ICT access and use by ensuring the periodical flow of information to government and society partners,

considering

- a) Resolution 8 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC as well as the Buenos Aires Action Plan, where it is proposed that the work of collecting and producing information and statistical data be mainly focused within the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), in order to avoid duplication in this field;
- b) that ITU works on guidelines and studies with the help and advice of experts in the field of measurement and indicators, including from the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH);
- c) the Buenos Aires Action Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the Tunis Agenda relating to indicators in the field of telecommunications/ICTs,

highlighting

- a) the responsibilities that ITU-D had to assume as a result of the Tunis Agenda, especially §§ 112 to 120 thereof;

¹ These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

b) that the Buenos Aires Declaration adopted by WTDC-17 declares that measuring the information society and elaborating proper and comparable indicators/statistics, in sex-disaggregated form, as well as analysing ICT trends, are important for both Member States and the private sector, the former being able to identify gaps that need public policy intervention, and the latter to identify and find investment opportunities, and that particular attention should be focused on tools for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

c) the mission of ITU, as approved by Resolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), particularly in regard to promoting, facilitating and fostering affordable and universal access to telecommunications/ICTs,

recognizing further

a) that the rapid development of telecommunications/ICTs is having an impact on the evolution of the digital divide, causing it in particular to widen between the developed and developing countries;

b) that bridging the digital divide is a crucial task in the context of developing the overall economy, including the digital economy, in areas related to telecommunication/ICT infrastructure;

c) that the development of an approach for achieving universal service through broadband access is one of the main goals of ITU;

d) that the ICT Price Basket (IPB) and the ICT Development Index (IDI) are important for measuring the information society and extent of the digital divide in international comparisons,

bearing in mind

a) that for the vast majority of global stakeholders interested and involved in telecommunications/ICTs (i.e. academics; business decision-makers; policy-makers; regulators), ICT statistics, and particularly the IPB and the IDI, are important ITU outputs;

b) that, in order to keep each country's public policy-makers properly informed, ITU-D shall continue to strive to gather and periodically publish a variety of telecommunication/ICT statistics which provide some indication of the degree of progress in and penetration of telecommunication/ICT services in the different regions of the world;

c) that, according to the guidelines of this conference, it is necessary to ensure as far as possible that the policies and strategies of the Union are fully in tune with the constantly changing telecommunication environment, and also to ensure consistency between the telecommunication/ICT development indicators contained in the IDI, the indicators on household ICT use and the goals and targets set out in the strategic plan for the Union for 2020-2023,

noting

a) that the Geneva Plan of Action adopted by WSIS identifies indicators and appropriate reference points, including indicators of ICT access, use, skills and affordability, as elements for the follow-up and evaluation thereof;

b) that the IPB studies and the IDI were developed by ITU-D and have been published annually since 2009;

c) that Resolution 8 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) instructs the Director of BDT, among other actions:

- to review, revise and further develop benchmarking, including through consultation and inviting contributions from Member States and experts, and ensure that ICT indicators, the IDI and the IPB reflect the real development of the ICT sector, taking into consideration different levels of development and national circumstances as well as ICT trends, in application of the WSIS outcomes; and
- to continue to work closely with Member States for the sharing of best practices concerning national ICT policies and strategies, including the development of statistics and their dissemination, and considering gender, age and any other disaggregated information relevant to the development of national public policies,

resolves

- 1 that ITU, as a specialized agency of the United Nations, should spearhead the tasks of compiling information and statistical data on telecommunications/ICTs; data for evaluating telecommunication/ICT trends; and data for measuring the impact of telecommunications/ICTs in narrowing the digital divide, showing, to the extent possible, their impact on matters related to gender, persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, and the different social sectors, as well as social inclusion, resulting from access in the areas of education, health and government services, etc., including their influence on the development and quality of life of all persons, highlighting their contribution to progress, sustainable development and economic growth;
- 2 that ITU should strengthen its collaboration with other international organizations involved in the collection of telecommunication/ICT-related statistical data, and update, when necessary, the standardized set of indicators, including through the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, improving the quality, comparability, availability and reliability of telecommunication/ICT data and indicators and fostering the development of strategies and national, regional and international public policy in the area of telecommunications/ICTs; and to take appropriate steps towards ensuring that ITU data and material be properly attributed when used;
- 3 that ITU should take further necessary measures to establish a valid structure and methodology for the IDI, working through EGTI/EGH, and through formal consultations with Member States², that allows the publication of the IDI on an annual basis, without ranking, provided that there are sufficient valid data to cover a majority of Member States;
- 4 that the IDI structure and methodology would be valid for a period of four years;
- 5 that ITU will formally consult Member States to provide them with the option to decline to participate in the IDI during the given period of validity, though with the choice to rejoin the exercise on an annual basis;

² If 70 per cent or more of the replies from the Member States indicate approval, the proposal shall be accepted.

6 that ITU should establish the criteria on the minimum data availability for Member States to feature in the IDI, working through EGTI/EGH;

7 that ITU should consult and seek agreement from Member States not meeting these criteria about proposed methods for supplementing data, including from other sources or from estimations, to enable their inclusion in the IDI;

8 that in the event that EGTI/EGH decide to review and revise the IDI, the same procedures as in *resolves* 3 above should be followed;

9 to publish annually the IPB,

instructs the Secretary-General and the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to take the measures necessary to enable ITU to carry out the tasks described under *resolves* above;

2 to ensure that indicators of telecommunication/ICT access, use, skills and affordability are taken into account in regional and world meetings convened for the purpose of evaluating and following up the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Agenda, the WSIS+10 outcome document adopted in UNGA Resolution 70/125, and the emergence of new challenges in achieving the development of an inclusive information society in the wider context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

3 to ensure that projects, while having highly different goals and scopes, take account of the data, indicators and indices for measuring telecommunications/ICTs for their comparative analysis and for measurement of their results;

4 to give the necessary support for the implementation of Resolution 8 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), including in relation to the IDI and IPB,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to urgently perform the tasks set out in *resolves* above;

2 to continue to promote the adoption of the telecommunication/ICT statistics and composite indices developed by ITU using an internationally recognized and transparent methodology based on official data provided by Member States, and to publish them regularly;

- 3 to develop, implement and maintain benchmarking tools and reports, such as the ITU DataHub, ITU Digital Development Dashboard and other relevant benchmarking publications, in consultation with ITU members, in order to disseminate indicators related to ICT infrastructure (deployment, access and connectivity); ICT usage and digital skills; and affordability, so as to provide information on progress towards creating an information society, bridging the digital divide and achieving the SDGs over time and across regions, and to make these tools and reports available to the general public on the ITU website;
- 4 to rely primarily on official data provided by Member States based on internationally recognized and transparent methodologies, while also taking into account their level of telecommunication/ICT and statistical database development; only in the absence of such information may other sources be used, after consulting with the focal points of the Member States concerned in advance on other sources used to obtain the information by means of which ITU fulfils the role referred to in *considering a)* above;
- 5 to start the dissemination of the telecommunication/ICT data surveys to the Member States' focal points by the end of the year, start data collection at the beginning of the following year, and publish the resulting data in the ITU database as soon as they are validated by the Bureau and within three months of their submission by the countries, in order to allow other organizations to build their indices on the basis of recent data from the Member States;
- 6 to make information available to EGTI/EGH on the availability of data for consideration in the development of the IDI;
- 7 to invite Member States to contribute and comment on the IDI methodology and structure;
- 8 to facilitate the work of EGTI/EGH in fulfilling the tasks set out under *resolves* above, including by correspondence;
- 9 to convene a meeting of EGTI/EGH following a formal consultation of Member States as appropriate, with a view to resolving any contentious issues and seeking consensus, while taking into account *instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau 12*, among Member States;

10 to send, by means of a circular letter, the full methodology and structure of the IDI, including the minimum data requirement for inclusion in the IDI, to Member States at the end of the consultation process and ahead of its publication, providing Member States with the possibility of not participating in the IDI;

11 to strive to improve data availability in all Member States, as instructed in Resolution 8 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), on the collection and dissemination of information and statistics, in order to achieve the largest coverage possible;

12 to preserve the integrity of all ITU's statistical work, ensure that the secretariat strictly adheres to UNGA Resolution 68/261, on the fundamental principles of official statistics, and with the Principles governing international statistical activities established by the United Nations Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities and endorsed by ITU;

13 to publish annually the IPB and the IDI, including studies, charts, benchmarks and in-depth analysis of successful best practices, so as to reflect progress or lack thereof in access to and use and affordability of ICTs;

14 to ensure that the annually published IDI and IPB are not retroactively updated or amended post publication, in order to assist decision-makers and ensure consistency in comparison of time-series data;

15 to liaise with other prominent international organizations, in particular those involved in the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, the United Nations Statistics Division and the United Nations regional commissions, and to consider their best practices and methodologies in the gathering, analysis, maintenance and presentation of statistics, indicators, reports and graphical tools;

16 to promote, within the ITU mandate and having particular regard to countries' specific characteristics, the activities required to define and adopt new indicators, including e-application and ICT skills indicators, for the purpose of measuring the impact of telecommunications/ICTs in countries' development, including their contribution to the development of the digital economy;

17 to promote efforts for the timely and transparent dissemination of the internationally agreed ICT methodologies and comparable indicators, particularly in relation to surveys that contain data from Member States, having regard to national contexts;

18 to monitor the development and improvement of methodologies relevant to indicators and data-collection methods, through consultation with, and inviting inputs from, Member States, among others, particularly by means of EGH, EGTI and the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium, coordinated by BDT;

19 to the extent possible, to ensure reliability, transparency and openness in the procedures used for processing the data supplied to ITU-D by Member States, in particular by making the IDI and IPB calculation methodologies and structures openly available in the statistical section of the ITU website in all six languages of the Union, including all algorithms, calculation formulae and sub-indices of the relevant index structures, as well as the source data received by ITU from Member States;

20 to hold, on a regular basis, regional seminars and training events for developing countries, in order to raise the level of knowledge and skills in the collection and processing of ICT indicators;

21 to give the necessary support for the implementation of Resolution 8 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), stress the importance of implementing the WSIS outcomes in relation to the indicators mentioned, and continue to avoid duplication in statistical work in this field;

22 by strengthening partnerships and collaboration through ITU-D, to leverage the role of telecommunications/ICTs as an enabler that contributes to development of the digital economy, the benefits of which contribute greatly to the overall economy;

23 to review ITU-D's work in developing statistics and indicators taking into account members' input into the process, to which end the Director of BDT is instructed to identify approaches that exist for members to provide regular inputs regarding their concerns in respect of the development and analysis of statistics and indicators as well as the way they are presented;

24 to submit a report to the ITU Council on progress in the implementation of this resolution and Resolution 8 (Rev. Kigali, 2022), and in particular on the work of reviewing the structures and calculation methodologies of the IDI and IPB;

25 to follow the other instructions in *instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau* of Resolution 8 (Rev. Kigali, 2022),

instructs the study groups of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector

to take into account the relevant findings of the Measuring Digital Development series of publications in order to help Member States bridge the digital divide,

instructs the Secretary-General

1 to submit a report to the next plenipotentiary conference on progress in the implementation of this resolution;

2 to encourage the participation of organizations which benefit from telecommunications/ICTs, particularly international organizations involved in achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to contribute towards the work of this resolution and to promote their potential membership of ITU;

3 to examine the necessary human and financial resources required in all the ITU Bureaux to conduct ITU's work in gathering, producing and publishing meaningful data, information, statistics and reports, and inform the Council of the results of this study,

instructs the ITU Council

on the basis of the findings of the annual report submitted by the Director of BDT in accordance with *instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau* 24 and *instructs the Secretary-General* 3 above, to make appropriate recommendations as necessary regarding the ongoing implementation of this resolution,

invites Member States

- 1 to participate in the submission to ITU-D of their national statistics in the area of telecommunications/ICTs for the purpose of international comparisons and determining the characteristics of the digital divide;
- 2 to participate actively, including through participation in EGTI/EGH, in the implementation of this resolution, by providing the requested information to ITU-D on access, use and skills as well as affordability of telecommunications/ICTs so as to produce telecommunication/ICT benchmarks.

(Marrakesh, 2002) – (Rev. Antalya, 2006) – (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) – (Rev. Busan, 2014) – (Rev. Dubai, 2018) – (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)
