ITU Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH)

11th Meeting, 18-21 September 2023, Geneva, Switzerland

SUMMARY

1. The 11th meeting of the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) took place from 18 to 21 September 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland full remote participation offered. The EGH meeting was held in conjunction with the 14th meeting of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI). A joint EGTI-EGH session on the ICT Development Index (IDI) was held on 18 and 19 September 2023. This report summarises the EGH sessions held on 20 and 21 September. The summary report of the EGTI meeting and the summary report of the IDI session are available on the webpages of the meetings (see above).

2. A total of 347 participants attended the meeting [1] including experts from regulators, telecommunication operators, ministries and national statistical offices (NSOs) from 105 countries, as well as ITU-D Sector Members, other UN agencies and regional organizations. Women made up 46 per cent of participants and 39 per cent of participants attended physically.

3. Ms Linah Ngumba, Head of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics' ICT Statistics Section, and Chair of EGH, chaired the meeting. ITU staff from the ICT Data and Analytics Division acted as the Secretariat.

4. The meeting discussed the contributions received in the EGH online forum on the 2023 Work Programme agreed by EGH at its previous meeting. Background documents on key topics of the agenda were prepared and disseminated to all EGH members in advance of the meeting. They were also shared during the meeting. These background documents aimed to provide relevant information to be used by EGH members and to support the debate and decisions to be taken during the meeting. Furthermore, the documents were prepared to advance these topics and make proposals to the whole EGH.

5. The discussions focused on progressing measurement and data collection across various topics. The agenda included items related to the measurement of e-waste and the measurement of ICT skills. A joint session with EGTI explored the topic of measuring over-the-top (OTT) services. The Secretariat also provided an information session on how Member States can complete the recently distributed ITU long questionnaires. In addition, the World Bank presented their

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[1] Includes participation for the joint EGTI/EGH session on IDI held on 18-19 September and the EGTI meeting held on 20-21 September.

experience with collecting data on mobile money and related indicators through their Findex survey. The meeting further discussed the future work of EGH, including the identification of topics that required further review and discussion related to indicators derived from household surveys of ICT access and use. Throughout the meeting, participants' discussions and inputs enriched the topics at hand.

6. The first substantive agenda item concerned an update from the joint EGH-EGTI subgroup on **measuring over-the-top (OTT) services** and was introduced through a joint session with EGTI. The subgroup leads, Oliver Füg of Telefonica and Winston Oyadomari of Cetic.br, presented a summary of the joint report, highlighting existing challenges for data collection on the supply side and the current OTT-related data collected through ICT household surveys. The subgroup recommended:
   - Promoting further exchange in the EGH and EGTI forums;
   - Member States to collect HH9 categories related to OTT and collect further data on the frequency of partaking in these activities;
   - Continuing to follow developments on Member State practices regarding provider/supply-side data collection through the EGTI Forum.

7. During the discussion, EGTI and EGH members asked for clarification on several points with Oman indicating that it is already collecting this type of demand-side data. EGTI and EGH members thanked the subgroup for its work and noted the challenges mentioned in collecting these data. In a subsequent session, Costa Rica noted that it will share results from its OTT study in December.

8. Subsequently, **EGH agreed to adopt new sub-indicators to measure frequency of use on existing HH9 indicators related to OTT services** - this will be part of an addendum to the Manual. **EGH also agreed to close the subgroup and continue to monitor and share country experiences on the EGH Forum.**

9. As part of an information session to both EGH and EGTI, the ITU provided guidance on how countries can complete the ITU long questionnaires on both WTI and household indicators that were recently distributed to Member States. The features of the new user-friendly platform were highlighted, and guidance was provided to facilitate the completion of questionnaires.

10. The next substantive agenda item concerned an update from the subgroup on **measuring e-waste**. Vanessa Forti of UNITAR presented an overview of the results of their recent baseline study on e-waste in East Africa.

11. Following this overview, the subgroup lead, Linda Kambale of the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, presented the subgroup's report, including its recommendations for a harmonized framework for the collection of indicators on e-waste that countries can use and adapt for their purposes.

12. In the discussion that followed, EGH members thanked Ms Forti, Ms Kambale and the subgroup for their work on the topic.

13. **EGH members adopted the framework** developed by the subgroup as a guideline for harmonized collection of e-waste data. **EGH closed the subgroup** as it has concluded its work and **will continue to monitor and share country experiences on e-waste surveys on the EGH Forum.**

14. The next agenda item addressed the subgroup on **aggregating the ICT skills categories**. The subgroup lead, Riina Vuorikari, presented the subgroup's report and noted evidence for concluding that assessing each individual's skill level is feasible. Supporting this conclusion, Howard Bilodeau of Statistics Canada presented its experience through a pilot study, noting low technical difficulty in implementation.

15. The subgroup lead then presented the subgroup's recommendations:
    - Transition to computing ICT skill levels for individuals;
    - Countries should make efforts to collect as many ICT skills indicators as possible to improve comparability;
    - Aggregates should be by skill area only until overall data availability improves - EGH should assess progress in two or three years.

16. In the discussion that followed, EGH members asked for clarification on the proposed techniques with members from Costa Rica and Lesotho indicating their interest in implementing the recommendations. EGH members thanked Ms Vuorikari, Mr Bilodeau and the subgroup for their work on the topic.

17. **EGH agreed to the recommendations of the subgroup** including the transition to the calculation of ICT skill levels for individuals. **EGH agreed to extend the mandate of subgroup** to address remaining issues particularly those regarding the robustness of ICT skills indicators and the consideration of required indicators within each skill area.

18. EGH also encouraged countries to contact the ITU if they are interested in participating in a country pilot noting that further country experiences are needed to inform discussion.

19. The item on ICT skills measurement was followed by an item featuring a presentation by Leora Klapper of the World Bank on survey data collected on mobile money and related indicators through the **World Bank's Findex survey**.

20. EGH members asked several questions for clarification and thanked Ms Klapper for the presentation. The EGH chair also encouraged members to continue to share their experiences and discuss on the EGH Forum.

21. The last substantive item of the agenda addressed future work of the EGH. The Chair noted the lack of activity on the EGH Forum in 2023 and requested input from members on how participation can be increased. In the discussion that followed, members noted that increasing coordination within countries between regulators and NSOs and promotion of capacity building efforts by the ITU could encourage more participation.

22. Subsequently, the EGH discussed the work programme for the coming year. EGH members clearly confirmed their support for the creation of a joint EGTI/EGH IDI subgroup as members from many countries indicated their interest in participating in this subgroup.

23. The ITU secretariat also presented a proposal for a new discussion topic on the relationship between the indicators on the share of *Households with Internet Access* and *Individuals using the Internet.* Official data received from countries on these two indicators can differ greatly. The discussion topic would welcome perspectives from members on whether large discrepancies between the two are for explainable reasons related to differing behavior of populations or if it might be due to different interpretations by respondents in different countries.

24. EGH then identified the following topics for the future work of the EGH:

   a. EGH agreed to extend the mandate of the subgroup on aggregating ICT skills;
   b. EGH agreed to open a new joint subgroup with EGTI on the ICT Development Index;
   c. EGH agreed to keep the following topic open as discussion topics of the EGH Forum:
      i. Review of the household long questionnaire;
   d. EGH agreed to open new discussion topics on:
      i. Measuring OTT services;
      ii. Measuring e-waste;
      iii. Mobile money;
      iv. Relationship between shares of *Households with Internet Access* and *Individuals using the Internet.*

25. The EGH Chair presented the draft conclusions and recommendations of the 11th EGH meeting, noting that all decisions will be subject to comments until 21 October 2023, after which they will become final. She thanked all the speakers and presenters and closed the meeting.