



BDT MEMBER COMMUNIQUÉ

ITU's global ICT data forum highlights the importance of measurement to achieve universal and meaningful connectivity

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The 2023 edition of the [World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium \(WTIS-23\)](#) emphasised the need for quality and timely data to measure universal and meaningful connectivity.

The Symposium, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) brought together around 300 participants, including international experts, policymakers, and data practitioners to shape and advance the information and communication technologies (ICTs) statistical agenda.

Under the theme, *Advancing the measurement agenda to achieve universal and meaningful connectivity*, participants discussed emerging trends, challenges, and collaborative solutions to improve the measurement of meaningful digital connectivity – the possibility to enjoy a safe, satisfying, enriching, and productive online experience at an affordable cost – globally.

“Achieving universal and meaningful connectivity is key for enabling digital transformation and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. The discussions and outcomes from WTIS will help to galvanize these global efforts,” said Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU’s Telecommunication Development Bureau. “By fostering collaboration among stakeholders and promoting the need for quality timely data for better decision-making in policies and strategies, the Symposium set the stage for a more inclusive and sustainable digital future.”

WTIS-23 reaffirmed the critical importance of universal meaningful connectivity, the utilization of big data, and the application of AI technologies in statistics. Several key areas of measurement were addressed:

- The Symposium highlighted the potential of big data derived from private open data sources and mobile phone data for informing evidence-based policies and fostering innovation in producing information society statistics.
- Experts discussed the ethical implications and practical applications of AI for official statistics, focusing on the integration of AI technologies to enhance data collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- The outcomes of the [Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators \(EGTI\)](#) and the [Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators \(EGH\)](#) were shared, highlighting the crucial role of international comparable data in monitoring ICT availability, access, usage, and affordability aiding policymakers in formulating inclusive strategies.

The event also provided an opportunity to update the ICT statistical community on the efforts to develop an ICT Development Index, and showcased several ITU statistical tools, including the updated ITU DataHub.

WTIS was chaired by Bernard Banda, Director of Economic Regulation and Consumer Protection of the Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority and Chair of the ITU Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI).

“Given the ambitious targets that the ITU community has set for itself in achieving universal and meaningful connectivity, I am confident that the improvements in statistics collected by the various countries that were discussed during WTIS -23 will greatly assist in directing efforts where we are also likely to realise the greatest impact,” Mr. Banda said.

During the Symposium, two new announcements were made:

- A [Dashboard for Universal and Meaningful Connectivity](#) was launched. It is part of the recent ITU-EU project on promoting and measuring universal and meaningful connectivity which is funded by the European Union. Through simple visualizations and tables, the Dashboard allows to track progress of countries towards the Universal and Meaningful Connectivity (UMC) Targets and to benchmark performance across countries. Launched as a ‘beta’ version, the Dashboard for Universal and Meaningful Connectivity will be further developed in the coming years.
- A [new collaboration between ITU and the World Bank](#) was announced. ITU and the World Bank’s Development Data Group will develop local capacity, including data science, data engineering, privacy by design, and institutional strengthening to responsibly leverage anonymized and aggregated mobile phone data for policy insights in 30 countries by 2030. The collaboration is part of the Global Data Facility (GDF), hosted by the World Bank.

Resources and background information:

- [Universal and meaningful connectivity \(UMC\) project](#)
- [Universal and meaningful connectivity \(UMC\) Targets](#)

Photos

- [WTIS-23 photos](#) (Flickr)

Videos:

- [What is Universal & Meaningful Connectivity and why does it matter?](#) (video)
- [World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium \(WTIS\) 2023 Highlights](#) (video)

Discover what others are saying on social media and join the conversation by searching and posting with the hashtag #ITUWTIS and #ITUdata

About the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), driving innovation in ICTs together with 193 Member States and a membership of over 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organizations. Established over 150 years ago in 1865, ITU is the intergovernmental body responsible for coordinating the shared global use of the radio spectrum, promoting international cooperation in assigning satellite orbits, improving communication infrastructure in the developing world, and establishing the worldwide standards that foster seamless interconnection of a vast range of communications systems. From broadband networks to cutting-edge wireless technologies, aeronautical and maritime navigation, radio astronomy, oceanographic and satellite-based earth monitoring as well as converging fixed-mobile phone, Internet and broadcasting technologies, ITU is committed to connecting the world. For more information, visit www.itu.int