



## BDT MEMBER COMMUNIQUÉ

# Stakeholders gathered to unlock new ICT data strategies for tracking global progress towards Universal and Meaningful Connectivity

**Geneva, 24 September 2024** - The 2024 edition of the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS-24) emphasised the need for quality and timely data for effective decision making to achieve universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC).

The Symposium, organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of International Telecommunication Union (ITU), brought together over 250 participants from 83 Member States, international experts, policymakers, business leaders, regulators, statisticians and researchers to discuss emerging trends, challenges, and collaborative solutions to improve the measurement of UMC – the possibility to enjoy a safe, satisfying, enriching, and productive online experience at an affordable cost.

“Unless we measure our progress toward universal and meaningful connectivity, that progress will be hard to track. We must invest in producing high-quality data which generates insights that enable more informed decision-making,” said Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU’s Telecommunication Development Bureau. “It is of high priority that we focus on bridging data gaps,” he added.

Under the theme, ‘From metrics to action: Bridging data gaps for universal and meaningful connectivity’, participants exchanged and shared innovative ideas based on diverse experiences and practices to ensure effective data collection to drive universal digital connectivity.

WTIS-24 was chaired by Miosotis Rivas Peña, Director General, National Statistics Office, Dominican Republic.

“It is essential to have solid and transparent methodologies that guide both data collection and its analysis and implementation in public policies. It is at the policy level where it is crucial to translate metrics into concrete actions to close connectivity gaps and advance toward universal and meaningful connectivity. This requires identifying underserved areas, developing inclusive policies, efficiently allocating resources, and continuously monitoring progress. Intersectoral collaboration and an appropriate regulatory framework facilitate the necessary investments to achieve this goal. Only by acting on the data and working together can we ensure that no one is left behind in this digital era.,” Rivas Peña said.

During the high-level session on ‘Data for universal and meaningful connectivity’ panellists shared their insights on leveraging data to inform decision-making in policymaking,

highlighting the challenges and opportunities they encounter in their respective roles. The panellists gave concrete experiences and strategies, and emphasized the importance of effective interaction with data producers.

Other key sessions addressed:

- the financing of ICT statistics, especially in developing countries, including examples of successful financing models and technical assistance from other statistical domains that can offer valuable insights to strengthen the capacity in ICT statistics;
- insights from the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and ITU Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH);
- how artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and Privacy Enhancing Techniques (PET) can be used to harness statistical innovation, to enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and scope of statistical data collection and analysis.

The event featured a keynote speech by Alan Smith, Head of Visual and Data Journalism at the Financial Times, who showcased the latest in data visualization tools and highlighted the importance of storytelling in data.

During the Symposium, the [ICT Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development](#), led by ITU, UNCTAD and UNDESA, celebrated its 20th anniversary. The milestone was marked with a session to discuss key achievements in the past two decades, as well as new areas of ICT measurement and the need to explore new data sources to complement current data sources.

Following WTIS-24, the [15th Meeting](#) of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and [12th Meeting](#) of the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) will take place on 25 and 26 September 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Resources and background information:

- [WTIS 2024 webpage](#)
- [ITU-D Statistics page](#)
- Photos - [WTIS-24 Flickr](#)
- Videos: [WTIS-24 highlights video](#)

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### **About the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**

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