



BDT MEMBER COMMUNIQUÉ

ICT Data Week 2026: Advancing measurement for a changing digital world

11 September 2026, Geneva, Switzerland - From 7 to 11 September, policy makers, statisticians, and industry experts gathered at ITU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, for ICT Data Week 2026 – a week dedicated to digital development statistics.

The 21st edition of the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS-26), held from 7 to 8 September, under the theme “Guiding digital policy through statistics” was followed by the 2026 edition of the annual meetings of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH).

“Bringing these meetings together creates a natural progression - moving from inspiration to action,” said Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU’s Telecommunication Development Bureau. “Reliable statistics are not created by chance. They are built on sound methodologies, careful data collection and validation, and international cooperation. New data sources and digital services are creating new challenges, and discussions taking place at the ICT Data Week aim to overcome those challenges with new forms of measurement.”

“WTIS is where we explore frontier topics, exchange ideas and learn from one another, while EGTI and EGH are where these ideas are debated, refined and translated into practical guidance and international standards,” he added.

WTIS-26: Guiding digital policy through statistics

WTIS-26, Chaired by Ms Rabia Awan, Deputy Director General of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, explored how ICT data can better inform decision-making in a fast-evolving digital landscape. Participants examined emerging areas of measurement including digital inclusion, integration of new data sources to address persistent data gaps, the use of artificial intelligence, and indicators to measure the sustainability of digital transformation. Through keynotes, interactive discussions, and case studies, the symposium highlighted innovative approaches to data and strengthen the link

between evidence and policy, while fostering dialogue on emerging priorities for digital development.

The Symposium also featured keynote speeches by Moritz Stefaner, a leading expert on data visualization and communication, who drew on insights from cognitive science to show data producers how they can communicate data more effectively, create impact and achieve their intended goals; and Dr Georges-Simon Ulrich, Director General of the Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland, who addressed the question “Which data can we trust?” in a world awash with data.

WTIS 2026 highlighted that the use of mobile phone data for policymaking and official statistics is moving beyond experimentation towards becoming a practical and trusted source of evidence.

Mobile phone data moves from experimentation to implementation

Mobile phone data can provide more timely and granular insights into areas such as population, mobility, connectivity and crisis response. Participants emphasized, however, that scaling its use requires strong governance, privacy safeguards, clear institutional roles and close collaboration between mobile operators, regulators and national statistical offices.

ITU’s methodological guide and Jupyter Notebooks Toolkit, its collaboration with experts of the UN Task Team on Mobile Phone data, and the ITU–World Bank GDF-MPD initiative are helping countries move from pilots towards sustainable implementation.

Data Hackathon uncovers hidden connectivity gaps

WTIS-26 also showcased the winning teams of the ITU Data Hackathon, “Bridging the Digital Divide by Uncovering Digital Deserts”, organised with the financial support of the European Union. Selected from 104 applications submitted by teams of students and young professionals from around the world, the three winning teams from Cambodia, India and the State of Palestine developed innovative, data-driven solutions to identify hidden connectivity gaps and support evidence-based policymaking for universal and meaningful connectivity.

ITU Expert groups advance measurement of emerging digital issues

Following WTIS-26, the 14th Meeting of the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) and the 17th Meeting of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) reviewed contributions from the current work period and finalized the topics under discussion. In addition, the meetings identified topics for the 2027 work programme.

The expert groups’ work in 2026 addressed rapidly evolving areas including artificial intelligence, satellite-based broadband connectivity and the environmental impact of

digital technologies, reflecting the growing need for internationally comparable statistics in these areas.

EGH agreed on new guidance for measuring how individuals use AI. Survey questions on AI use will be organized around five areas: writing, editing or summarizing text; seeking information or practical guidance; creating, editing or analyzing media; data analysis or coding; and social or personal interaction.

This common framework will help countries move beyond measuring simply whether people use AI towards collecting internationally comparable information on how they use it.

EGTI, meanwhile, adopted new indicators for pilot data collection to help countries assess the satellite-based connectivity landscape. Its 2027 work programme will include defining and refining indicators in other critical areas, including device affordability and data centres.

Country and regional experiences were central to the discussions. Contributions from Botswana, Brazil, Colombia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Portugal, and Zimbabwe, as well as LACNIC, demonstrated how peer learning and exchange can strengthen ICT statistics. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Botswana, for example, shared practical experiences in developing ICT household statistics.

EGH was chaired by Linah Ngumba, Head of the ICT Statistics Section of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, while EGTI was chaired by Panayotis Kyriakides, Economist from the Office of the Commissioner for Electronic Communications and postal Regulation of Cyprus.

As part of the ICT Data Week, a dedicated in-person workshop gave EGTI and EGH members an opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices in data collection, processing and dissemination, and to discuss practical challenges faced by statistical producers.

The workshop included a half-day hands-on session on using mobile phone data, as well as a focus group on the ITU DataHub and its AI Assistant prototype.

Resources and background information:

- [WTIS-26 webpage](#)
- [WTIS-26 photos](#)
- [WTIS-26 highlights video](#)
- [14th Meeting of the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators \(EGH\)](#)
- [17th Meeting of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators \(EGTI\)](#)
- [ITU Data Hackathon](#)
- [ITU-D Statistics page](#)

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 agency for digital technologies, driving innovation for people and the planet with 194 Member States and a membership of over 1,000 companies, universities, civil society, and international and regional organizations. Established in 1865, ITU coordinates the global use of the radio spectrum and satellite orbits, establishes international technology standards, drives universal connectivity and digital services, and is helping to make sure everyone benefits from sustainable digital transformation, including the most remote communities. From artificial intelligence (AI) to quantum, from satellites and submarine cables to advanced mobile and wireless broadband networks, ITU is committed to connecting the world and beyond.

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