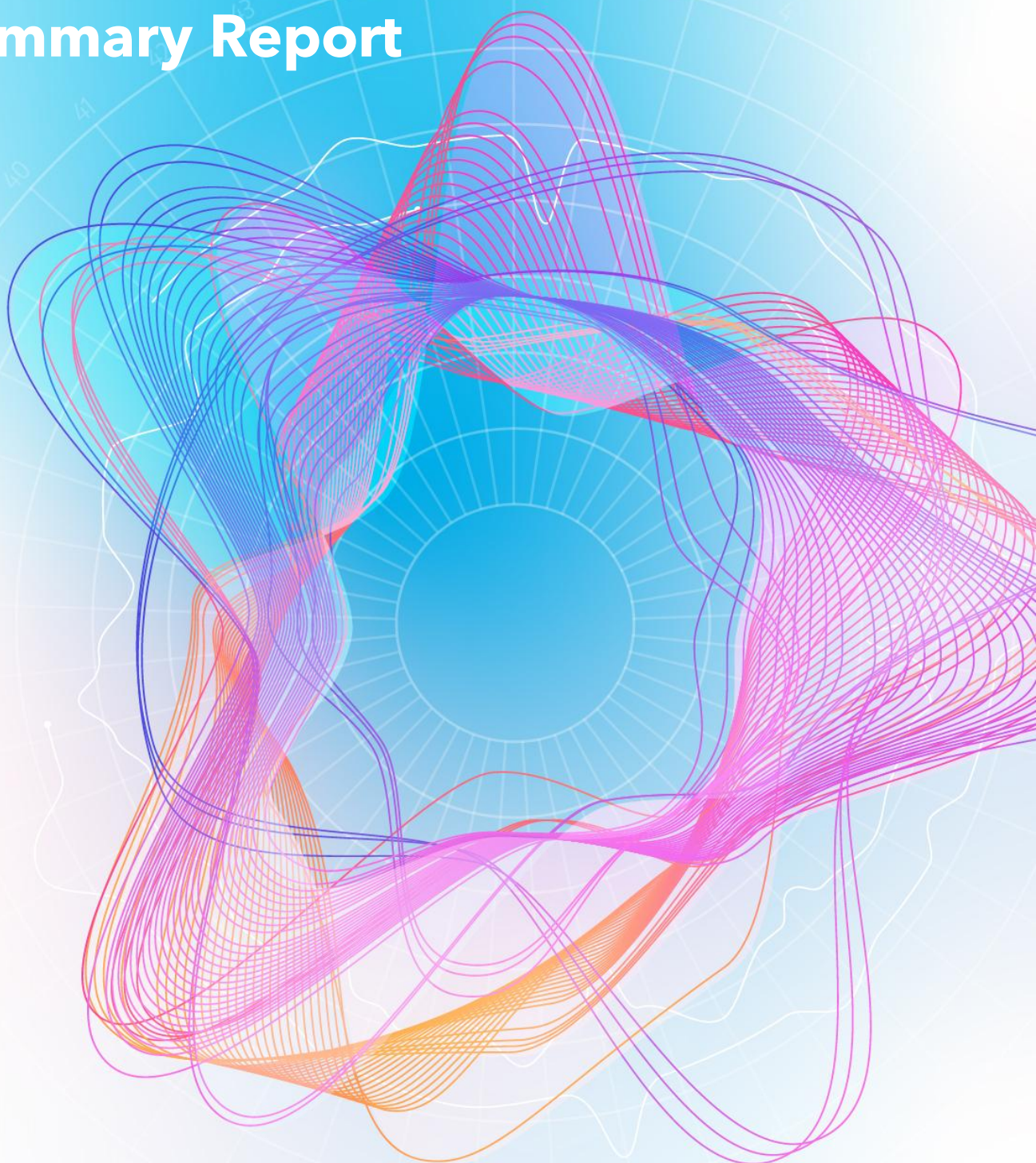




ITUWTIS
GENEVA2026

World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium 2026

Summary Report



Guiding digital policy through statistics

Under the theme “Guiding digital policy through statistics”, the 21st edition of the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS-26) was held at ITU headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on 7-8 September 2026.

WTIS-26 explored how data can better inform decision-making in a fast-evolving digital landscape. It brought together policymakers, statisticians and industry experts to examine emerging measurement priorities, including digital inclusion, the 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, strengthened the

link between evidence and policy, and fostered dialogue on emerging priorities for digital development.

WTIS-26 was part of *ICT Data Week* and preceded the annual meetings of the [Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators](#) (EGTI) and the [Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators](#) (EGH).

This report presents key highlights of each session. The [WTIS-26 webpage](#) provides additional information, including [webcasts of all sessions](#), the [ICT Data Week communiqué](#), and background resources. Photos are available on [Flickr](#), and a [highlights video](#) is available on YouTube. For more information about ITU’s statistical work, visit the [ICT Data and Analytics Division’s webpage](#) or write to indicators@itu.int.

Programme

[Interactive version](#)

Day 1 Monday, 7 September	Day 2 Tuesday, 8 September
1. Opening of WTIS-26	7. Session: UMC Data Hackathon: Meet the winners!
2. Session: Data-driven digital transformation in practice: A policy dialogue	8. Keynote: “We have plenty of data. The question is: Which data can we trust?” by George-Simon Ulrich
3. Keynote: “Beautiful insights – the art and science of data visualization” by Moritz Stefaner	9. Session: EGTI and EGH reporting and interactive discussion
4. Information session: Inside the ITU DataHub and the Statistics Team’s transformation journey <i>This session is not part of the official programme.</i>	10. Session: AI and official statistics: Opportunities and practical applications
5. Session: The next frontier of ICT statistics: What matters to the private sector	11. Session: Mobile phone data for policy and official statistics
6. Session: Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development: The future of core ICT indicators	12. Closing of WTIS-26

1. Opening of WTIS-26



Speakers

- [Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava](#), Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, International Telecommunication Union
- [Doreen Bogdan-Martin](#), Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union
- [Rabia Awan](#), Deputy Director General, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics; WTIS-26 Chair

Summary

The opening of WTIS-26 emphasised the central role of trusted statistics in guiding digital policy at a time of rapid technological change. Speakers highlighted the need to keep measurement relevant as artificial intelligence, new data sources and digital services transform both digital development and the production and use of statistics.

Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava [underscored](#) that reliable statistics are built on sound methodologies, careful data collection and validation, and international cooperation. He highlighted the complementarity between WTIS, where new topics and ideas are explored, and EGTI and EGH, where they are refined and translated into practical guidance and international standards. He pointed to ITU's work on mobile phone data for official statistics, including capacity development in partnership with the World Bank, as well as continued development of the ITU DataHub and new AI-based tools to make statistics more accessible and useful. He also highlighted the ITU Data Hackathon, which attracted 104 teams to develop innovative approaches to identifying digital deserts, including strong participation from students and young professionals. He stressed that

governments, regulators, statistical offices, international organizations, academia and the private sector all have a role in producing credible statistics.

Doreen Bogdan-Martin stressed that policymakers face no shortage of data, estimates, rankings and dashboards; the challenge is knowing what can be trusted and what the figures reveal. She highlighted ITU's role in bringing together official data from its members using internationally agreed definitions and indicators. Better evidence on where digital gaps are, who they affect and what drives them can help policymakers respond more effectively and advance universal and meaningful connectivity. Looking ahead, she identified measuring the AI transformation as the next frontier. This will require evidence on where AI is being adopted, how it is diffusing, and who has the skills and access to benefit. As AI increasingly helps people find and interpret information, authoritative and reliable statistics will become even more important.

Rabia Awan emphasised that rapid digital transformation is challenging traditional approaches to measurement: what was measured only a few years ago may no longer be sufficient to understand today's digital economy and tomorrow's digital society. The objective should not simply be to produce more statistics, but to ensure that they remain relevant, timely, comparable, trusted and fit for purpose. She highlighted the opportunities offered by AI and mobile phone data to improve timeliness, efficiency and analytical capabilities, while noting the associated challenges around methodology, quality, governance, privacy, confidentiality and public trust.

She stressed that innovation must be accompanied by capacity building, sustainable financing, appropriate standards and international cooperation, particularly for developing countries. Stronger partnerships across statistical offices, regulators, international organizations, technology companies, academia and data providers will be essential to ensure that no country is left behind in measuring digital transformation. She encouraged participants to share national experiences and challenges and to consider not only what and how to measure, but how statistics can ultimately inform policies and improve people's lives.

2. Session Data-driven digital transformation in practice: A policy dialogue



Speakers

- Moderator: [Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava](#), Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, International Telecommunication Union
- [Alexandre Barbosa](#), Head, Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society (Cetic.br), Brazil
- [Iza Razija Mešević](#), Chairwoman, Council of the Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- [Rodney Taylor](#), Secretary-General, Caribbean Telecommunications Union

Summary

The session explored how data and evidence can better inform digital policy and how measurement needs to evolve as technologies and policy priorities change.

Alexandre Barbosa illustrated how ICT statistics are informing policy in Brazil. Data from household surveys and the telecommunications regulator have supported the National Plan for Digital Inclusion, reflecting a multidimensional understanding of connectivity encompassing affordability, devices, quality, skills and safety. Evidence from the ICT Kids Online survey also contributed to debates leading to legislation on children's online safety. He identified stakeholder engagement, capacity building across the statistical production cycle, effective dissemination, regular and comparable data, sustainable funding and disaggregation as key ingredients of policy-relevant statistics.

Iza Razija Mešević described how Bosnia and Herzegovina's communications regulator complements operator data with measurements generated directly by broadband users. The resulting geospatial information provides

evidence on actual quality of service, helps verify operators' claims and supports responses to consumer complaints. Combining regulatory, statistical, geospatial, user-generated and other data could provide a more complete basis for regulatory and policy decisions, provided that datasets become interoperable rather than remaining in institutional silos.

Rodney Taylor highlighted the diversity of Caribbean Small Island Developing States and the value of evidence in identifying changing policy priorities. A study covering Eastern Caribbean countries showed substantial progress in household connectivity between 2014 and 2024, while revealing persistent challenges related to affordability, service quality and digital skills. Regional cooperation can help countries address resource and capacity constraints through common definitions and instruments, joint surveys and training, and greater sharing of expertise.

Looking ahead, Mr Barbosa identified AI, universal and meaningful connectivity, data centres and digital infrastructure, and trust, safety and digital rights as emerging measurement priorities. He stressed that innovation should not come at the expense of continuity and international comparability: new indicators should be developed through consultation, aligned with international frameworks and carefully tested.

Ms Mešević similarly argued that emerging technologies require more timely, multidimensional and granular evidence, including greater use of alternative data sources. AI presents a dual measurement challenge, both as something to measure and as a potential tool for statistical production.

The discussion also underscored the importance of sustained statistical capacity building and cooperation. Mr Barbosa emphasised long-term investment in people and institutions rather than isolated training activities, while Mr Taylor highlighted South-South learning and regional approaches as ways to pool scarce resources and fill data gaps.

In their concluding remarks, panellists identified three priorities: stronger attention to the environmental sustainability of digital transformation; data that reflect today's digital ecosystem; and sustained dialogue between data producers and users to produce the right evidence for policy decisions.

3. Keynote “Beautiful insights – the art and science of data visualization” by Moritz Stefaner



Speakers

- Moderator: [Min Suk Lee](#), Executive Director, Korea Information Society Development Institute (KISDI)
- [Moritz Stefaner](#), Truth and Beauty Operator, Germany

Summary

Moritz Stefaner [explored](#) how thoughtful design can transform data from something merely available into information that is understandable, useful and memorable. Drawing on projects from different fields, he argued that data visualization is not simply about making information attractive, but about making deliberate choices that help people identify signals in large amounts of data and engage meaningfully with the information presented.

Examples illustrated different ways in which design can create value. A visualization developed for Deutsche Bahn helped users make complex operational data more legible and actionable, while the [OECD Better Life](#) Index showed how a distinctive visual language can make multidimensional information iconic and memorable. Stefaner contrasted these approaches with conventional dashboards that present users with large quantities of information without sufficient guidance or hierarchy.

The [German COVID-19 vaccination dashboard](#) illustrated an alternative approach centred on users and the questions they are likely to ask. Mobile-first design helped impose sequencing, hierarchy and focus, while data-generated text provided a low-barrier and accessible way of communicating key figures. The same underlying data could also be presented from different

perspectives and at different levels of detail. More broadly, Stefaner stressed that data design involves choices not only about presentation, but also about how information is collected, measured, aggregated, compared and contextualized, for which audiences and for what purpose.

Stefaner also explored ways of moving beyond conventional digital visualizations. Through “[Data Cuisine](#)”, participants translated statistics into food, creating tangible and social experiences around relatively small datasets. Such approaches can make abstract statistics more relatable and memorable, while turning data into a starting point for conversation rather than an endpoint. A climate vulnerability project similarly demonstrated the importance of moving beyond abstract scores towards information that shows how many people are affected and where, making results easier to understand and communicate.

A recurring message was that the form of a data product should follow its purpose. Rather than beginning with a predetermined dashboard, chart or platform, producers should first ask why the data are being communicated, why audiences should care, and what they need to do with the information. This requires engaging users early, understanding how they find and consume information, and recognizing differences in statistical literacy, technology and context. An exploratory phase can help identify the most meaningful stories and perspectives before deciding on the final product.

In the discussion, Stefaner emphasised that effective visualization must combine beauty with truth. Representations should not imply greater precision than the underlying data support, and designers need to understand what the data mean. Testing products with different audiences can counter the “curse of knowledge”, whereby experts assume that others will see what they see. Key messages can also be reinforced through multiple forms—titles, captions, callouts and visuals—to increase the likelihood that information is understood and remembered. Ultimately, good data design requires conscious choices about when to follow established conventions and when a different form can reveal something that audiences might otherwise fail to notice.

4. Information session Inside the ITU DataHub and the Statistics Team's transformation journey



Speakers

From the [ICT Data and Analytics Division](#), International Telecommunication Union:

- [Fredrik Eriksson](#), Data Scientist
- [Thierry Geiger](#), Senior Economist and Head of Division
- [Martin Schaaper](#), Senior ICT Analyst

Summary

The information session presented recent and planned developments to the [ITU DataHub](#) and DataHub AI and invited participants to contribute to an assessment of ITU statistical publications.

Thierry Geiger [demonstrated](#) several new DataHub features designed to make ICT statistics easier to explore and customize. Users can now pin indicators from across the platform to create personalized selections and generate tailored PDF profiles. A new data coverage view shifts the focus from indicator values to the availability of official data and ITU estimates, allowing users to assess coverage across key areas and over time. The ICT price baskets have also been integrated into a dedicated DataHub dashboard, while household indicators can now be explored using two levels of disaggregation, providing greater granularity. Other improvements include new visualizations for ICT skills and enhanced indicator search and data querying.

Looking ahead, planned developments include greater user customization and the integration of an AI assistant into the DataHub. Work is also under way on a new platform for the [Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development](#), bringing together indicators

from multiple international organizations to provide a broader picture of digital development.

Participants were invited to explore the tools in greater depth and provide feedback during the WTIS Practitioners' Workshop.

Fredrik Eriksson [presented DataHub AI](#), which has been substantially redesigned since the prototype demonstrated at WTIS-25. Its aim is to improve access to ITU data and statistical methodologies through natural-language interaction. The assistant can retrieve definitions and methodological guidance, explore ITU statistical resources, query DataHub indicators and generate customized visualizations. It supports multilingual queries and uses a multi-agent architecture connecting different specialized tools and ITU knowledge and data sources. Demonstrations showed how users could retrieve methodological information, explore previous ITU events, and produce a chart comparing Internet use across countries and regions, with the underlying data available for download.

Several lessons from developing the assistant were highlighted. Clearly defining its scope and purpose is essential for choosing the appropriate technical architecture. Accuracy requires extensive testing: the team developed 160 test questions, manually verified expected answers and investigated the causes of poor results. Cost and performance also require continuous optimization, including trade-offs between model capabilities and expense. Finally, governance and safeguards are critical, including authentication, usage monitoring, measures to reduce hallucinations and clear boundaries on what the assistant should answer.

Martin Schaaper introduced an assessment of ITU [statistical products](#), with an initial focus on [Facts and Figures](#). The exercise aims to better understand how these products are accessed and used, their perceived value and policy impact, and how their future relevance and sustainability can be strengthened. Participants [completed a survey](#) during the session and were invited to participate in subsequent focus-group discussions, providing evidence that will feed into recommendations for future improvements.

5. Session The next frontier of ICT statistics: What matters to the private sector



Speakers

- Moderator: [Tina Ambos](#), Professor of International Management, Geneva School of Economics and Management, University of Geneva, Switzerland
- [Richard Benjamins](#), CEO, OdiselA, Spain
- [Azeddine Gati](#), Director, Department for Networks and IT Environmental Impact Assessment, Orange Innovation, Orange, France

Summary

The session explored what the next frontier of ICT statistics means from a private-sector perspective, focusing on new data sources, artificial intelligence and the need to measure value beyond conventional measures of performance.

Moderator Tina Ambos framed the discussion around a growing gap between the abundance of data and the availability of evidence that can inform decisions. Rapid technological change is creating both new sources of data and new questions about which indicators can meaningfully capture economic, social and environmental impact.

Richard Benjamins [described](#) how the digital transformation of businesses is generating large volumes of observed data that can complement traditional survey-based statistics.

Telecommunications data, for example, can provide timely insights into mobility, tourism and population movements. He illustrated their potential through applications ranging from public transport planning to disaster response and the monitoring of mobility during COVID-19. Such data can support both official statistics and concrete interventions, but he stressed that producing insights is not enough: data need to be translated into action and social value.

Dr Benjamins identified two persistent challenges: the “first mile” of gaining sustainable access to privately held data and the “last mile” of ensuring that resulting insights are actually used. Privacy, representativeness, data quality, digital literacy and ethical considerations all need to be addressed. Sustainable business models are also essential: relying on philanthropy or one-off arrangements is unlikely to support systematic data sharing at scale. Public-private partnerships should therefore create incentives and value for all parties while ensuring that data ultimately contribute to societal outcomes.

Azeddine Gati [focused on the environmental dimension](#) of digital transformation. For telecommunications operators, achieving net-zero commitments while continuing to expand networks requires reconciling environmental, economic and social objectives. He argued that existing indicators tend to measure these dimensions separately and proposed moving beyond conventional key performance indicators towards measures of value that combine them. Network expansion, for example, can increase energy use while simultaneously generating social value by connecting underserved populations. The challenge is therefore not simply to create more indicators, but to find meaningful ways of bringing existing measures together.

The discussion highlighted the difficulty of quantifying social value and the environmental implications of growing data traffic, data centres and AI. Participants also considered how operators might capture value from AI while continuing to invest in infrastructure. Benjamins argued that social benefits—from improved disaster preparedness to broader access to education—should be incorporated more systematically into assessments of value, while Gati emphasised that approaches to combining environmental, social and economic indicators remain at an early stage.

Ms Ambos concluded that closer cooperation among the private sector, public institutions and academia is needed to establish common ground on data, measurement and value creation. Clear objectives are essential for deciding how such partnerships should work, from commercially sustainable initiatives to interventions serving areas where no viable business case exists.

6. Session Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development: The future of core ICT indicators



Speakers

- Moderator: [Alexandre Barbosa](#), Head, Cetic.br, Brazil
- [Deniz Susar](#), Senior Governance and Public Administration Officer (UNDESA)
- [Nils Berglund](#), Research Associate, European University Institute
- [Sibille Radka](#), Digital Policies and Trade Coordinator, Universal Postal Union (UPU)
- [Kola Ijasan](#), Research Director, Research ICT Africa

Summary

The session examined how the Partnership's indicators framework should evolve amid rapid digital transformation. The session was moderated by Alexandre Barbosa who highlighted the central challenge as balancing innovation with continuity: indicators must address artificial intelligence, cloud services, digital public infrastructure, connected devices, and platform-based services while preserving essential measures of connectivity, access, affordability, skills, inclusion, and use.

Deniz Susar explained that the [Partnership](#), established in 2004, maintains a core list of more than 50 ICT indicators covering infrastructure, access and use, business, trade, education, government, and e-waste. Following the WSIS+20 review in December 2025, the Partnership was tasked with conducting a systematic review of these indicators and reporting its findings to the Commission on Science and Technology for

Development in 2027. To support this process, a global consultation was launched to gather stakeholder input. Preliminary responses highlight the continued value of the core list as a global baseline while suggesting new areas for measurement, including AI, cybersecurity, trust, and multilingualism. He encouraged stakeholders to contribute to the survey by November 2026.

Nils Berglund called for measures that go beyond access and infrastructure to capture connectivity's reliability, openness, security, respect for rights, and resilience. He suggested tracking disruptions, outages, platform blocking, and access to essential services through collaboration among statistical offices, regulators, civil society, and technical communities. He emphasised the importance of collaboration among national statistical offices, regulators, civil society, and technical communities.

Radka Sibille proposed measuring connectivity in schools, post offices, and libraries to capture access for rural and underserved communities. She suggested publishing separate rates and an equally weighted composite indicator, using existing postal data while developing library reporting. Common definitions and geographic classifications would be essential; health facilities and local government offices could be added later.

Kola Ijasan stressed that connectivity does not guarantee meaningful participation. He called for household surveys to measure affordability, personal device access, connection quality, digital skills and use, and inequality, with results disaggregated by location, gender, income, and age.

The discussion highlighted emerging issues such as 5G, AI, disaster resilience, e-government outcomes, and Internet shutdowns. A broad consensus supported maintaining a stable core of internationally comparable indicators while introducing thematic modules. It was emphasised that any new indicators should be policy relevant, conceptually clear, methodologically sound, internationally comparable, and feasible to collect.

7. Session UMC Data Hackathon: Meet the winners!



Speakers

- Moderator: [José L. Cervera-Ferri](#), Senior Project Manager, "Promoting and Measuring Universal and Meaningful Connectivity", ICT Data and Analytics Division, International Telecommunication Union
- **Team QBits**: Apoorv Adarsh (Team Leader), Aditya Jain and Tarun Bansal, Students, B.Tech in Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE), Jaypee Institute of Information Technology, India.
- **Team NextPlease**: Mohammed Mahmoud Jebreen Tomaizeh (Team Leader), Graduate; Yazeed Alhaddad and Andrew Nabil Lwiz Odeh, Students, Computer Science student, Birzeit University, State of Palestine.
- **Team FortiData**: Raksa Kun (Team Leader), Data Analyst, Cambodia Tourism Board; Kimhong Set, Research and Skills Intelligence Analyst, Skills Development Fund; Taing Molika, Business Quality Assurance Specialist and Soklieng Phat, Digital Data Scientist, Advanced Bank of Asia Limited, Cambodia.
- [Sofie Maddens](#), Chief, Digital Knowledge and Society, BDT, ITU

Summary

ITU staff presented the winning projects of the ITU UMC Data Hackathon, titled "*Bridging the Digital Divide by Uncovering Digital Deserts*", which was launched during WTIS-25 in September 2025 as part of the ITU and European Union project on [Promoting and Measuring Universal and Meaningful Connectivity](#) (UMC) in collaboration with the ITU Area Office for South Asia and Innovation Centre.

The initiative brought together 104 teams of students, researchers, and data professionals from

35 countries around the world to develop innovative, data-driven solutions for identifying connectivity gaps and populations left behind in the digital transformation. [Mentors](#) from the Telecommunication Development Bureau and the National Communications Academy Finance of India delivered trainings, provided project development support and acted as jury.

The three winning teams presented their projects during the session. QBits presented [The Connectivity Mirage](#), which explored the gap between reported and actual use of mobile connectivity on a campus in New Delhi and developed a mobile app that can be used elsewhere to replicate the study. NextPlease developed a Digital Desert Index to assess [connectivity challenges in refugee camps](#) in the West Bank. FortiData created a [province-level Digital Desert Index](#) to identify and analyse drivers of digital exclusion in Cambodia.

Other outstanding projects presented by teams from Bangladesh, Ghana/Kenya/Niger, India, Jordan, Malawi, Mozambique and Rep. of Korea are also available on the official [Hackathon webpage](#).

In her summary, Sofie Maddens highlighted that all these data science projects combined official and alternative data sources, at a very granular geospatial detail and using advanced statistical methods. The dissemination of results, supported by interactive tools, showed that territorial gaps are hidden by national averages. The projects considered the multidimensional aspects of connectivity, including not only infrastructure, but also quality of service, access to devices, digital skills and socioeconomic factors such as poverty levels.

She stressed that mobilizing youth talent in data science is crucial: national statistical offices often face the challenge of attracting and retaining brilliant statisticians and IT experts, much prized by the private sector. Hackathons with replicable and scalable solutions can help NSOs modernize their production and dissemination methods and ultimately lead better data and better decisions.

8. Keynote “We have plenty of data. The question is: Which data can we trust?” by George-Simon Ulrich



Speakers

- [Georges-Simon Ulrich](#), Director General, Federal Statistical Office, Switzerland; Chair of the UN Statistical Commission (2024–2025)
- Moderator: [Rabia Awan](#), Deputy Director General, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics; WTIS-26 Chair

Summary

In his [keynote address](#), Georges-Simon Ulrich explored how official statistics can remain a trusted source of evidence as artificial intelligence fundamentally changes how people access and use information. While data are more abundant than ever, he argued that the central challenge is increasingly determining which information can be trusted. As users turn directly to AI systems rather than statistical offices or even search engines, they may no longer see the original source, methodology or assumptions behind an answer. Official statistics therefore risk becoming less visible even when high-quality data are readily available.

Ulrich stressed that official statistics remain essential to evidence-based decision-making because they are underpinned by professional independence, quality assurance, sound methodologies and comparability. Their importance extends beyond statistical production itself: unreliable evidence can lead to poor decisions about schools, healthcare, infrastructure and public resources. Statistical offices therefore need to adapt proactively to changing information habits while safeguarding privacy and ensuring that sensitive individual and business data remain protected.

He identified four priorities for statistical offices: greater transparency about methods, quality and

uncertainty; stronger dialogue wherever data are discussed or misinterpreted; greater visibility for the experts who can explain and contextualize statistics; and ensuring that official statistical results are discoverable by AI systems. Professional independence remains fundamental, but statistical offices can no longer assume that producing high-quality statistics is sufficient if users and emerging technologies cannot find or identify them.

Against this background, Ulrich presented the [Trusted Data Observatory](#) (TDO), an initiative developed by the [Swiss Federal Statistical Office](#) and the [Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs](#) with international partners. Its objective is to make trusted official data easier for AI systems and other users to identify, understand and reuse through standardized, machine-readable metadata. Rather than creating another data repository, the approach would establish a discoverability and trust layer while allowing data to remain with their original producers. Harmonized metadata could improve interoperability and help preserve data sovereignty by enabling countries to retain control over access to their data.

The discussion examined how statistical systems can innovate while maintaining confidentiality, comparability and methodological integrity. Ulrich emphasised harmonizing metadata and standards while allowing data to remain within national legal frameworks. Responding to concerns about pressures on statistical offices to innovate rapidly, he advocated structured experimentation, comparing new approaches with established methods before incorporating them into statistical production. He also stressed the need for legal frameworks to evolve to support responsible data reuse.

Participants also raised questions about countries' participation in setting standards and the tension between greater public engagement and the political independence of statistical offices. Ulrich argued that common standards provide an essential reference point for interoperability, while statistical offices must become more active in explaining their data without compromising neutrality. The session concluded by emphasizing that statistical innovation and integrity must advance together, supported by international cooperation and capacity development so that developing countries are not left behind.

9. Session EGTI and EGH reporting and interactive discussion



Speakers

- Moderator: [Anisa Duncan](#), Telecommunications and Statistics Professional, Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)
- [Linah Ngumba](#), EGH Chair, Head, ICT Statistics and Digital Economy Section, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)
- [Panayiotis Kyriakides](#), EGTI Chair, Economist, Office of the Commissioner for Electronic Communications and Postal Regulation (OCECPR), Cyprus

Summary

Moderator Anisa Duncan opened the session by underscoring the role of EGH and EGTI in keeping ICT indicators relevant, reliable and responsive to a fast-changing digital environment, before inviting each Chair to report on their group's work since the previous Symposium.

Linah Ngumba (EGH Chair) [presented the conclusions](#) of the 13th EGH meeting (September 2025). She noted an increase in in-person attendance from recent years and gender balance approaching parity. She highlighted five areas advanced by the meeting: measuring AI use through household surveys, where members agreed to focus questions on conscious, specific use rather than a single broad concept and to extend the subgroup's mandate, drawing on Austria's country experience; survey quality, including a real-time quality-assurance approach shared by Brazil and the EDiT consortium that cut fieldwork error rates substantially; country

experiences from Viet Nam, Colombia and Kazakhstan on integrating ICT questions into other surveys and reconciling results across sources; and the joint EGH-EGTI work to revise the ICT Development Index (IDI) methodology, which expires at the end of 2026, including proposals to incorporate 5G coverage, add fixed-broadband penetration where available, and review goalposts. She closed by outlining EGH's current work: particularly on the continued AI and IDI subgroup mandates.

Panayiotis Kyriakides (EGTI Chair) [reported on the 16th EGTI meeting](#). Topics covered included the joint IDI review; sub-national administrative data, with experience shared by Oman and the Dominican Republic; satellite-based broadband connectivity, for which a subgroup was created for 2026 following interest and insights from Ghana; quality of service, including the use and limitations of third-party measurement tools; the environmental footprint of the ICT sector, examined by a subgroup drawing on experience from Brazil; and meaningful connectivity indicators for OTT and messaging services, informed by Austria's experience. He also presented EGTI's 2026 programme, where new indicators on greenhouse gas emissions and satellite connectivity were investigated, the joint IDI subgroup continued, and quality of service, ICT prices and device affordability, sub-national data, OTT measurement and middle-mile (data centre) connectivity were discussed.

The session closed with an interactive Mentimeter poll asking participants which emerging ICT topics EGH and EGTI should prioritize over the next two years; AI, device affordability, satellite connectivity and digital well-being emerged as the leading themes. Reflecting on the results, Mr Kyriakides noted AI's growing relevance as a disruptor across the indicators EGTI already tracks, while Ms Ngumba agreed that AI and digital well-being are likely to remain top priorities for EGH's future work.



10. Session AI and official statistics: Opportunities and practical applications



Speakers

- Moderator: [Haoyi Chen](#), Officer-in-Charge, Data Integration, UN Statistics Division (UNSD)
- [Marco Marini](#), Division Chief, Statistics Department, International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- [Latifa AlShehhi](#), Data-tech leader and AI Strategist, UAE Government; Ambassador, Women in AI UAE
- [Frauke Kreuter](#), Chair of Statistics and Data Science, LMU Munich and University of Maryland, College Park

Summary

Haoyi Chen (UNSD), the moderator of the session, opened by noting that AI is reshaping both how statistics are produced and how they are accessed, and invited three panellists to share complementary perspectives before opening the floor to discussion.

Marco Marini (IMF) focused his [presentation on dissemination](#), describing how AI assistants are becoming the primary gateway to data, creating a risk that official statistics could lose visibility and relevance. He argued that “AI-ready” data requires machine-readable formats, rich metadata and standards – above all SDMX. An example of this is the [IMF's StatGPT tool](#), launched in June 2026. He also pointed to the Model Context Protocol (MCP) as an emerging standard for connecting AI directly to statistical data services, citing early examples such as the [SDMX AI Assistant](#), OECD's MCP pilot and IMF's Talk2 Manuals tool, and called for broader engagement with technology companies.

Latifa AlShehhi (UAE Government) [presented “trusted intelligence”](#) as a governance framework for using AI inside official statistics, tracing the evolution of labour statistics from manual counts to today's “orchestration” era. She outlined five recurring challenges – visibility, accuracy and trust, confidentiality, governance, and skills – and described the UAE's approach to agentic AI, including a national target to move 50% of government operations to agentic tools within two years. She stressed five non-negotiables for trustworthy AI-enabled statistics: provenance by design, permanent human oversight, privacy by default, end-to-end auditability, and a single quality gate applied equally to AI-generated and official data.

Frauke Kreuter (LMU Munich / University of Maryland) [addressed both directions of the AI-statistics relationship](#). She reviewed early uses of AI in question design, synthetic data generation and AI-assisted interviewing, noting encouraging but still limited evidence on data quality, particularly for synthetic replacement of survey data. She also argued that official statistics can improve AI. Because today's models are post-trained on feedback from a narrow and often unrepresentative pool of annotators, national statistical offices could help ground AI systems in more representative population data. This may emerge as benchmarks that AI providers could be evaluated and trained against.

The subsequent discussion covered several topics. These included concerns about cybersecurity and whether AI development is outpacing regulatory frameworks. Participants also raised the risk that AI models trained on limited data from lower-income countries could widen existing data gaps. Sustainability and resource costs were discussed as well.

Overall, the session highlighted the need for adaptability. Official statistics must evolve by building trust, traceability and human oversight into AI-enabled processes. This must be accompanied by strong data governance and privacy safeguards. Official statistics can also strengthen AI – national statistical offices hold data that could help ground and post-train AI models to better reflect the societies they serve. Navigating these changes requires investment in skills, governance and partnerships. Collaboration across NSOs and international partners will be key to ensuring countries are not left behind.

11. Session Mobile phone data for policy and official statistics



Speakers

- Moderator: Mr [Daniel Power](#), Managing Director, Flowminder Foundation
- [Esperanza Magpantay](#), Senior Statistician, ITU
- [Benjamin Makai](#), Senior Manager for Technology for Development, Safaricom, Kenya
- [Henri Numbi Ilunga](#), Head, Market Observatory, ARPTC, DR Congo

Summary

The session examined how mobile phone data (MPD) can support official statistics, public policy and emergency response through governance and partnerships. The moderator, Daniel Power, opened with the experience from DR Congo, where anonymized mobile data is being used to map population movements and help anticipate Ebola's spread.

Esperanza Magpantay presented [ITU's work on MPD](#), including the joint project with the World Bank and the UN Task Team on Mobile Phone Data. She highlighted the MPD governance framework with its three pillars: strategic, legal and technical. She also introduced the Practitioner Guide on the Use of MPD, an update on the ITU/WB Global Data Facility MPD project involving 23 countries, the ITU Jupyter Notebook Toolkit, and the ITU Mobile Phone Data Portal. She concluded that ITU's work on MPD aims to help countries move beyond pilots and institutionalize MPD in national statistical systems.

Henri Numbi Ilunga described [DR Congo's governance model](#) involving the regulator, mobile operators and Flowminder. The regulator authorizes data use, requires anonymization and

oversees confidentiality through agreements and reviews. Applications include network planning, COVID-19 analysis, population movements following the 2021 volcanic eruption, vaccination-site planning and Ebola response. Mobility patterns helped identify areas connected to outbreak zones and prioritize surveillance. He stressed that involving more operators would improve geographic coverage and representativeness, and plans to extend to other use cases, including on information society.

Benjamin Makai presented "[Mobile Big Data for Shared Value](#)," and emphasised that responsibly governed mobile network data can complement official statistics by providing timely insight into population dynamics, mobility, urbanisation, connectivity gaps and shocks. The presentation highlighted MPD as national decision infrastructure, creating shared value when business relevance and societal impact reinforce each other. Safaricom's partnership with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics illustrates how mobile data can support dynamic population estimates, mobility analysis and future work on SDG 17.8.1. The presentation further emphasised that success depends on trusted partnerships, clear public-purpose questions, lawful mandates, statistical rigour, privacy, transparency and accountability.

The discussion addressed access to MPD, privacy and operators' participation. Panellists clarified that aggregate mobility analysis does not involve contact tracing or merging individual health records. Starting with one operator can build experience, while multiple operators improve representativeness, regional coverage and resilience. Panellists emphasised that MPD implementation costs may be driven more by staff, infrastructure and analysis than by data acquisition.

The session concluded that sustainable MPD programmes require institutional legitimacy, transparent agreements, privacy-preserving methods, capacity building and collaboration among governments, regulators, statistical offices, operators and technical partners.

12. Closing of WTIS-26



Speakers

- [Sofie Maddens](#), Chief, Digital Knowledge Society Department, International Telecommunication Union
- [Rabia Awan](#), Deputy Director General, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics; WTIS-26 Chair

Summary

In the closing session, Sofie Maddens and Rabia Awan reflected on the main messages emerging from WTIS-26 and emphasised the need for ICT measurement to continue evolving alongside rapid technological change.

Speaking on behalf of the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, Sofie Maddens highlighted three main takeaways from the symposium. First, measurement systems must keep pace with the changing digital landscape, with indicators evolving to remain relevant and respond to emerging policy needs. Second, the statistical community should embrace innovation. Artificial intelligence, mobile phone data and other new approaches offer opportunities to produce, analyse and use statistics in new ways. AI has a dual role: as an emerging phenomenon that needs to be measured and as a tool that can transform statistical work. At the same time, innovation must preserve the quality, transparency and trust underpinning official statistics.

Her third message concerned collaboration. New technologies are creating new domains to measure and new methodological challenges that no institution can address alone. WTIS provides a community in which practitioners can exchange experiences and advance the ICT measurement agenda collectively. She noted that this work

would continue immediately through the annual meetings of EGTI and EGH, where ideas and challenges raised during WTIS would feed into discussions on indicators, methodologies and future priorities.

Ms Maddens thanked the 33 speakers and 301 participants from 72 countries who had contributed to the symposium, congratulated the three winning Data Hackathon teams, and recognized the work of the organizing team and the leadership of the WTIS-26 Chair.

In her closing remarks, Rabia Awan reflected on the symposium's theme, "Guiding digital policy through statistics". She emphasised that statistics do more than measure digital transformation: they help societies understand and respond to it and assess whether its benefits are being shared. Measurement frameworks therefore need to adapt to new technologies, business models and patterns of digital behaviour.

Ms Awan highlighted collaboration among national statistical offices, regulators, the private sector, academia and international organizations as a recurring theme of the discussions. She also pointed to the Data Hackathon as an example of how younger generations can use statistics to generate insights for policymaking and emphasised the importance of data visualization and effective communication in ensuring that statistics remain relevant and accessible.

AI and mobile phone data illustrated both the opportunities and challenges associated with statistical innovation. New approaches can strengthen measurement, but innovation should not undermine trust or the fundamental principles of official statistics. Awan also stressed that countries experience digital transformation differently and that developing countries need the capacity, resources, standards and partnerships required to strengthen their statistical systems.

Before formally closing WTIS-26, she posed a series of questions to the statistical community, inviting further reflection: Are we measuring what matters? Are indicators keeping pace with technological change? Are relevant statistics reaching those who need them? And are data being used to ensure that no one is left behind?

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Thank you to all WTIS-26 participants!





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