



BDT MEMBER COMMUNIQUÉ

Global progress continues toward universal and meaningful connectivity

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Global momentum toward universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC) continues to strengthen, as reflected in the [2026 edition of the ICT Development Index \(IDI\)](#). The results show steady advances across access, adoption, affordability and infrastructure, with countries in all regions and income groups moving closer to UMC.

The IDI, designed to assess UMC – the possibility for everyone to be online in optimal conditions, at an affordable cost, anywhere and anytime needed – captures countries’ progress and, in doing so, provides a high-level view for identifying connectivity gaps and enabling policymakers to strengthen evidence-based digital development strategies.

“The results of this edition of the IDI are encouraging,” said Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT). “Countries across all regions and income groups have moved closer to universal and meaningful connectivity. Connectivity is expanding, networks are reaching more people, affordability is improving, and Internet use continues to grow. However, disparities remain, and opportunities for improvement exist across all income groups, including the need for improved statistical reporting to drive evidence-based digital transformation.”

The global average score for the 159 economies included in this edition reached 79 out of 100, reflecting continued progress toward UMC. IDI scores range from 25 to 100, with a 75-point gap between the lowest-and highest-scoring economies, underscoring persistent disparities both between and within regions and income groups. The average IDI score ranges from 42 in low-income economies to 93 in high-income economies, with fixed-broadband affordability and Internet use showing the largest gaps. High-income economies are nearing UMC and therefore have less room for further gains, particularly on infrastructure-related indicators.

Additional findings from IDI 2026 include:

- Among the 151 economies included in both the 2023 and 2026 editions, 146 improved their IDI score, with changes ranging from –8 to +27 points.
- Based on this comparable set, the average IDI score increased from 74 to 80 points.
- Lower-middle-income economies recorded the largest average improvement between the 2023 and 2026 editions (+10 points), followed by low-income economies (+8 points), reflecting faster progress from lower starting levels.

This is the final edition within the current four-year validity period of the methodology; the ongoing revision process for the next period, starting in 2027, has confirmed that the scope for major methodological changes remains limited by the continued lack of internationally comparable ICT statistics in several areas. This highlights the importance of sustained investment in ICT statistics, as well as greater efforts to strengthen statistical capacity and expand data availability in emerging areas of digital development.

More information:

IDI 2026 covers 159 economies, down from 164 in 2025, 170 in 2024 and 169 in 2023. Changes in coverage reflect variations in the availability of official ICT data across economies and years.

- [ICT Development Index dashboard](#) on ITU DataHub.
- [ICT Development Index 2026](#) publication.
- [More information](#) about the ICT Development Index.

For questions, please contact:

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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 194 Member States and a membership of over 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organizations. Established over 150 years ago, 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.

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