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Internet use in LLDCs has doubled, with opportunities to expand further, says new data report

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The *Facts and Figures: Focus on Landlocked Developing Countries* report released today by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), shows that Internet use in LLDCs more than doubled since the second International Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC2) in 2014, increasing from 15 per cent to 39 per cent in 2023.

However, this remains significantly lower than the global average (67 per cent), and the 351 million people of LLDCs still offline account for 13 per cent of the global offline population.

Limited international connectivity infrastructure and affordability remain key connectivity barriers in LLDCs.

Even though the affordability of broadband services improved faster than in the rest of the world, in most LLDCs, prices are typically higher than the world medians. For example, the median price of an entry-level mobile-broadband plan in LLDCs is 60 per cent higher than the world's median price. Furthermore, although mobile broadband (3G or above) is the main way to connect to the Internet in LLDCs, only 82 per cent of the population is covered by a mobile broadband signal, compared with 95 per cent of the world's population.

“Although our data indicates that LLDCs are at various stages on their journey toward universal and meaningful connectivity, they share common obstacles and can benefit from mutual learning,” said Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau. “Ahead of the upcoming third International Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3), we are presenting this publication to serve as an advocacy tool to help stakeholders in identifying connectivity gaps and make evidence based decisions on prioritizing the bridging of the existing gaps by policymakers, industry and the global development community so that everyone in LLDCs can enjoy the benefits of universal and meaningful connectivity which serves as an accelerator for the timely achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

LLDCs are very diverse in many respects, from income level to urbanization rate to size, which underlines the need for flexibility in approaching the varied challenges of bringing universal and meaningful connectivity to people living in LLDCs. The underlying conditions in each country must be fully understood to develop truly impactful policies.

The report also includes a contribution from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on e-trade, highlighting the interconnectedness of digital

infrastructure and the global marketplace, and how e-commerce can serve as a catalyst for sustainable development in LLDCs. A section on regulation and digital governance frameworks provides an assessment of the state of ICT regulation in LLDCs.

Key findings

Among the key findings for *Facts and Figures: Focus on Landlocked Developing Countries*:

Internet use has grown but remains low: Internet use in LLDCs is at 39 per cent compared to the global average of 67 per cent.

The gender digital divide in LLDCs remains significant: 44 per cent of the male population in the LLDCs use the Internet, compared with 35 per cent among women.

Internet usage among youth is higher than among the rest of the population in the LLDCs: 54 per cent of young people (15- to 24-year-olds) in LLDCs are online, compared with 36 percent among the rest of the population. Despite narrowing over the last four years, the gap in LLDCs is wider than it is globally.

Connectivity gap between rural and urban populations is significantly wider than the global average: 28 per cent of the population in rural areas is online, compared with 64 per cent of the population in urban areas. This represents a gap of 36 percentage points, which is notably wider than the global gap of 31 percentage points.

Mobile-broadband and fixed broadband penetration in the LLDCs lagged far behind the world's average: The LLDCs report 53 mobile-broadband subscriptions per 100 people, compared with 87 subscriptions per 100 people globally, and only 4 fixed-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, compared with a global average of 19.

Six out of ten people in the LLDCs owned a mobile phone, compared to the global average of 78 per cent.

82 per cent of the population in LLDCs is within reach of a mobile broadband network (3G or above), far below the global average of 95 per cent.

In addition to the 18 per cent of the population that do not have any access to a broadband network, **43 per cent of the population in LLDCs has access to the Internet but does not use it.** This *usage gap* results from various barriers, including the lack of affordability, digital skills, and of relevant content.

Internet in LLDCs still costly. Despite rapid falls in mobile-broadband prices, the median price of an entry-level mobile-broadband plan in LLDCs is 60 per cent higher than the world's median price. The fixed broadband basket in LLDCs costs more than twice the global median.

Read the full report, *Facts and Figures: Focus on Landlocked Developing Countries*, [here](#).

Resources and background information:

- [Report website](#)
- [Trello](#)

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For questions, please contact:

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