Measuring the Information Society Report

2015

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ITU

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Foreword

It is my pleasure to present to you the 2015 edition of the Measuring the Information Society (MIS) Report. This annual report presents a global overview of the latest developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs), based on internationally comparable data and agreed methodologies. It aims to stimulate the ICT policy debate in ITU Member States by providing an objective assessment of countries' performance in the field of ICT and by highlighting areas that need further improvement.

One of the key findings of this year's MIS Report is that the least developed countries (LDCs) are making progress with their connectivity initiatives. However, in 2015, only 6.7 per cent of households in LDCs had Internet access compared with 46 per cent of households worldwide and more than 80 per cent of households in developed countries. The report also reveals that, globally, 46 per cent of men and 41 per cent of women are Internet users.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the great potential of ICTs and calls for significantly increased access to ICTs, which will play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of all the sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is ITU's priority to support our membership in the achievement of the SDGs, in close collaboration with other partners.

One of the core features of the MIS Report is the **ICT Development Index (IDI).** This year's report analyses ICT developments over the past five years. The results show that all of the 167 economies included in the IDI improved their IDI values between 2010 and 2015. This is good news and reflects the continuous evolvement of the global information society.

The progress in a number of developing countries which have displayed significant improvements in their IDI values and rankings since 2010 is particularly encouraging. These more dynamic countries have seen substantial increases in, among others, mobile-broadband penetration, household ICT access and international Internet bandwidth. Their experience confirms the importance of developing enabling environments for ICT investment and innovation, and the policy approaches of these dynamic countries could be relevant to other developing economies.

Over the past five years, there has been a widening of the gap in IDI values between countries ranked in the middle and those towards the bottom of the distribution. In the LDCs, the IDI grew less compared to other developing countries and, in particular, the LDCs are falling behind in the IDI use sub-index, which could impact on their ability to derive development gains from ICTs.

The latest data show that the price of mobile-cellular services continues to fall across the world, as the number of mobile-cellular subscriptions approaches 7.1 billion and mobile network population coverage reaches close to 95 per cent. In LDCs, the mobile-cellular price basket continued to fall, down to 14 per cent of GNI p.c. by end 2014, compared with 29 per cent in 2010.

Mobile broadband tends to be cheaper than fixed broadband. Mobile-broadband prices have fallen significantly and are expected to continue falling over the next years. Prices in this market segment are

much more volatile and new innovative pricing schemes are emerging which could provide viable solutions for low-income populations. Over the past year, the decrease in mobile-broadband prices worldwide made the service on average between 20 and 30 per cent more affordable. Prepaid mobile-broadband offers are the most affordable option, and make the service almost as affordable as mobile cellular. These are promising developments which need to be complemented by efforts to extend mobile-broadband services beyond the main cities, into rural and remote areas.

The rapid spread of ICT infrastructure and devices is accelerating the progress of the **Internet of Things (IoT)**. IoT is expected to significantly impact almost every social and economic sector, including education, healthcare, agriculture, transportation and manufacturing. Most of the value derived from IoT comes from the generation, processing and analysis of new data. This report shows how IoT and big data analytics can help address major development challenges such as those related to megacities, climate change, food security and resource management.

The potential of IoT is determined by the available ICT infrastructure and data-processing capacity. While some IoT applications may run with low-speed and low-capacity connectivity, others will require high-capacity broadband connections that rely on fixed-broadband infrastructure, larger international Internet bandwidth and backbone capacity.

I hope you will find this report informative and useful in mapping strategies to grow the ICT sector and drive the socio-economic development of countries.

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