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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau |
| Report on the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS) 2016 and 2017 |
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| **Summary:**The document provides a summary of the 14th WTIS, held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 21-23 November 2016. The meeting featured a number of high-level policy debates on pertinent issues related to ICT policy and monitoring for sustainable development, bringing together users and producers of ICT data. The ITU flagship publication Measuring the Information Society Report 2016 was launched at the Symposium, which includes the latest ICT Development Index (IDI), a benchmarking tool that monitors information society developments worldwide. Delegates endorsed the work of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) and agreed on a number of conclusions and recommendations for future work on ICT measurement by the national and international community.**Action required:**TDAG is invited to note this report and provide guidance as deemed appropriate.**References:**WTDC Resolution 8 (Rev. Dubai, 2014); PP Resolution 131 (Rev. Busan, 2014). |

**Introduction**

First held in 1996, and annually since 2005, the ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS) has evolved to become the main global forum for telecommunication and information society measurements. It brings together delegates from all over the world, ranging from government ministers and business leaders to regulators, national statisticians, lead academicians and ICT data producers and analysts.

The objective of the Symposium is to debate new and emerging issues in the field of ICT data and statistics and their role in policy making, to provide strategic guidance to the national and international community on information society trends and future monitoring, to showcase the impact of ICT on development based on quantitative analysis, and to develop standards and methodologies for producing high-quality data and statistical indicators. WTIS provides a unique platform for ICT data users and producers to meet and exchange knowledge, share best practices, identify business opportunities and enhance cooperation.

**WTIS-16**

The 14th WTIS took place in Gaborone, Botswana, from 21-23 November 2016. It was organized by ITU and hosted by the Government of Botswana.

WTIS-16 attracted around 400 participants from 60 countries, representing public and private organizations including ministries, regulators, national statistical offices, universities and research institutions, and regional and international organizations.

WTIS-16 highlighted the important work that ITU is carrying out in terms of ICT statistics and the role of WTIS in bringing together ICT data producers and users, and the opportunities it provides in terms of discussing ICT measurement issues, sharing experiences, and learning from others.

The Symposium highlighted the continued need for high-quality, timely, and disaggregated ICT data to enable policy makers take the right policy decision, and for sustainable development. At the same time, it provided guidance on how to achieve better ICT data for better policies.

The Ministerial Roundtable emphasized that an inclusive information society is an important prerequisite for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which pledges to leave no one behind in creating a more peaceful, prosperous planet. Ministers recognized that only a fully connected world will allow all people equally to benefit from the rights and opportunities that the SDGs voice.

The Leaders’ Dialogue recognized that ICTs are having profound changes on society, the environment and the economy. These lead to often entirely new digital ecosystems and present both opportunities and challenges for people and societies. In order to create knowledge economies and benefit from the extensive availability and use of ICTs, a solid backbone infrastructure is required. This will lead to greater innovation and technical advances, greater efficiency and more, better and more sustainable services.

The *Measuring the Information Society Report 2016* was launched on the second day of the Symposium. The report features the latest ICT Development Index (IDI), a benchmarking tool that monitors information society developments worldwide. The latest IDI captures the level of ICT developments in 175 economies worldwide, presents country rankings, and compares progress made during the past two years. Awards were presented to the top IDI 2016 performer, the Republic of Korea, and to the most dynamic country, St Kitts and Nevis, in terms of IDI changes between 2015 and 2016. The Symposium agreed that the data presented in the Report provided useful insights on progress in ICT access, use and skills, the development of the global digital divide, and barriers to Internet uptake, including the cost of ICT services. Policy makers need to address broader socio-economic inequalities and help people acquire the skills they need to take full advantage of the Internet.

The reports by the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH) were presented and endorsed by the Symposium, including its proposals for future work, in particular the newly created sub-group to review the indicators included in the IDI.

WTIS-16 highlighted the importance of improving the collection and disaggregation of ICT statistics, including by disability, and urged countries to improve data availability for the monitoring of the SDGs and to ensure ‘’no one is left behind‘’ in accessing and using ICTs.

The Symposium recognized the importance of exploring the use of big data for official statistics and welcomed the ITU pilot project on ‘Big Data for Measuring the Information Society’ which aims to explore ways on how data from the ICT industry could be used to produce new or complement existing ICT indicators.

The Symposium recognized the devastating effects of disasters on human beings and on economic development, and in particular on the world’s most vulnerable population groups. ICTs provide unprecedented opportunities to provide critical tools for disaster monitoring, early warning, and emergency response efforts and to effectively address the issue of climate change.

The main conclusions and recommendations agreed upon by WTIS-16 are available on the WTIS website at <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/events/wtis2016>.

**Extraordinary Meeting of the Expert Group on Telecommunication/ICT Indicators (EGTI) and the Expert on ICT Household Indicators (EGH)**

As a follow-up to the joint EGTI/EGH Meeting held in October 2016 and the decision to review the indicators included the IDI, an Extraordinary Meeting of EGTI and EGH took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 1-3 March 2017. The main objective of the Meeting was to discuss, debate and agree on a revised set of indicators to be included in the IDI, based on two input documents prepared by the EGTI sub-group and an independent group of experts.

The Extraordinary Meeting adopted a total of 14 indicators to be included in the IDI compared to the current list of 11 indicators. The Meeting agreed that the results of the new IDI will be published in 2018, to provide sufficient time to undertake statistical tests and to allow countries to gather and report data on the new indicators included in the IDI.

**WTIS-17**

The 15th WTIS will take place in Tunisia, in November 2017[[1]](#footnote-1), hosted by the Government of Tunisia. It will include a number of international high-level panel debates on key issues related to ICT policy and monitoring bringing together users and producers of ICT data. Panellists will include Ministers, Director-Generals of National Statistical Offices, Heads of Regulatory Authorities, CEOs from the business sector and other high-level experts.

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1. Dates to be confirmed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)