



BDT MEMBER COMMUNIQUÉ

Progress made towards universal and meaningful connectivity, with low-income economies showing most improvement

Geneva, 25 June 2024 – The world is making progress towards universal and meaningful connectivity (UMC) – the ability for everyone to go online under optimal conditions, at an affordable cost, anywhere and anytime they need - according to the 2024 edition of ITU’s ICT Development Index (IDI). The average overall score for the 170 economies covered in the new edition of the IDI is 74.8 out of 100, reflecting an improvement of 3.3 percent from the 2023 edition.*

More than half of the economies studied are past the 80-point mark. These results suggest that the world is well advanced on its way to UMC. However, enormous disparities prevail: the lowest IDI score is 21.3 out of 100, and 29 economies are scoring below the 50-point mark.

Low-income economies showed the largest improvement; the group’s average IDI score is 36.2, up 13.7 per cent from the previous edition. The largest score increases were driven mainly by gains in Internet use, mobile broadband penetration, and affordability. In contrast, high-income economies saw a score increase of only 1.4 percent, largely because their average score is 91.7, leaving much less room for improvement.

“Measurement is critical for achieving universal and meaningful connectivity. The journey toward a fully and meaningfully connected world is far from over, but with the right data, tools, and commitment, we can make significant strides in ensuring everyone benefits from digital connectivity, contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable future,” said Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau. “However, we have to recognize that each country has its own characteristics, faces its own challenges, and must follow its own development path.”

Key highlights

IDI 2024 overall results: The lowest IDI score is 21.3 out of 100, the highest is 100.0. Forty-two economies have an IDI score between 90 and 100. Another 49 economies have a score between 80 and 90, and 41 economies scored between 60 and 80. At the other end of the scale, nine have a score between 50 and 60, and a further 29 economies score below 50.

Income groups: Low-income economies showed the largest average improvement with a 13.7 per cent increase. Lower-middle-income economies saw a 5.3 per cent increase, upper-middle-income economies a 2.8 per cent increase, and high-income economies a 1.4 per cent increase.

Pillar scores: Scores on the universal connectivity pillar range from 6.7 to 100, with an average of 69.6. The meaningful connectivity pillar scores range from 30.6 to 99.9, with an average of 80.0.

Indicators: All ten indicators saw improvements in their average normalized scores from 2023 to 2024. The largest improvement was in mobile data and voice affordability, while the smallest was in mobile phone ownership.

Digital divide: The gap between low-income and high-income economies remains significant. For example, the average IDI score for low-income economies is 36.2, compared to 64.8 for lower-middle-income economies.

Areas for improvement

Important concepts of UMC – such as digital skills, safety, and qualitative aspects of connectivity such as speed, reliability and types of devices – are not captured in the IDI 2024, like the 2023 edition, due to the lack of appropriate indicators or insufficient data availability. Consequently, a robust performance in the IDI does not necessarily mean that UMC has been achieved, because performance could be lacking in dimensions not included in the IDI.

Additionally, 20.4 per cent of IDI indicator values were estimated or imputed due to data availability issues, underscoring the need for improved statistical capabilities and ICT data collection.

ITU will continue to support countries in measuring connectivity through guidelines, data collection tools, capacity-building activities, and technical assistance, aiming for a more comprehensive assessment in future IDI editions.

***Comparison with the 2023 edition**

The ICT Development Index 2024 assesses the extent to which a country's connectivity is universal and meaningful. The IDI 2024 covers 170 economies, one more than the 2023 edition. Five countries are included for the first time, while four countries covered in 2023 are not included in 2024 because of insufficient data.

This means that only 165 economies assessed in both the 2023 and 2024 editions can be compared. Among them, 158 improved their scores, with the global average IDI score increasing from 72.9 to 75.3, representing a growth of 3.3 per cent.

Resources and background information:

- [ICT Development Index 2024](#)

- [IDI Dashboard](#)

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