



Input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2023

The Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development¹ is a multi-stakeholder initiative comprising 14 regional and international organizations to improve the availability and quality of data and indicators on the availability and use of information and communications technologies (ICT), particularly in developing countries, to support digital policies for sustainable development.

(a) Progress, experience, lessons learned, challenges and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the SDGs and targets, including policy implications of their synergies and trade-offs.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that “the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies”. However, out of the 232 indicators in the SDG monitoring framework, only 7 are ICT related. To help address this gap, the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development released a thematic list of ICT indicators for the SDGs in November 2019, that can be used to measure ICT availability and use in sectors relevant to the SDGs that are not covered in the global SDG indicators framework.² In accordance with the focus of the HLPF 2023, this input will focus on the indicators related to SDGs 9 and 17.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability of countries to conduct survey-based data collection and delayed statistical production overall, including their ability to improve the availability of ICT statistics. At the same time, the enforced digitalization of many aspects of daily life increased the urgency of producing more and better ICT statistics in support of efforts to monitor post-pandemic recovery. The pandemic also highlighted the limitations of traditional sources of data for ICT statistics and brought renewed interest in finding innovative and alternative data sources, such as administrative data, big data and data-sharing schemes with the private sector to support digital policy making.

Building the capacity of national statistical offices to produce ICT statistics continues to be a priority and will require the support of development partners and international organizations, including through the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

(b) Key areas for transformative actions for accelerated progress and where support is most urgently needed.

¹ <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/intlcoop/partnership/default.aspx>

² <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/intlcoop/partnership/Thematic ICT indicators for the SDGs.pdf>

In the context of the 2023 HLPF, the Partnership's thematic list of ICT core indicators is relevant to monitoring progress in SDGs 9 and 17. Statistical offices in developing countries need support from their national governments and the international community to improve their capacity, including building skills and allocating regular and sufficient resources, to produce at least those indicators included in the thematic list of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development. In turn, the indicators should be proactively used to support the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies to achieve SDGs 9 and 17, and produce insightful analysis to identify priorities for action and accelerate progress.

For example, to inform SDG 9 to “build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”, countries should produce and link indicators on access to the Internet by households, businesses and schools, access and coverage of mobile broadband, availability of international Internet bandwidth, and affordability (in particular broadband prices). All these indicators can help measure the readiness of countries to leverage digital infrastructure for social inclusion, economic growth, and scientific innovation. The ability to leverage digitalization to overcome geographical constraints is particularly important for landlocked developing countries and small island developing states. The same indicators can inform SDG 17 to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development”, to measure how countries have been able to “enhance the use of enabling technologies”. Last but not least, these indicators can help countries better assess the digital readiness to face future crises.

[\(c\) Examples of specific actions taken to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic that also accelerate progress towards multiple SDG targets, including actions identified by your intergovernmental body, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving SDGs.](#)

N/A

[\(d\) Assessment of the situation in the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and within the respective areas addressed by your intergovernmental body, and policy recommendations, commitments, and cooperation measures for promoting a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.](#)

There is still a dearth of official statistics on ICT, despite the fact that ICTs are enablers for the SDGs, that the COVID-19 pandemic increased the digital divide between developed and developing countries, and that policies should be evidence-based. There is still a disconnect between policies for digital development and the availability and quality of official statistics needed to establish baseline, monitor progress, and evaluate impact.

The SDG monitoring framework must be complemented by indicators that allow countries to measure progress in leveraging digitalization as an enabler of sustainable development, such as those proposed by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

As the 2030 deadline looms, national statistical offices in developing countries need the support of their governments and the international community to ensure that they can build skills and have sufficient resources to produce official statistics that are key inputs to digital policies for achieving the SDGs. The knowledge and capacity building resources of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development are also available to national statistical offices, regulators and policy makers from developing countries.

(e) Key messages for inclusion into the Political Declaration of the September 2023 SDG Summit
Agenda:

Countries should recognize that official statistics are key inputs to digital policies for achieving the SDGs and prioritize the improvement of such statistics so that countries are able to measure progress in leveraging ICTs for development in time for the 2030 deadline.