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# Measuring the Information Society Report

## Volume 1

2018

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# Foreword

I am pleased to present to you the 2018 edition of the Measuring the Information Society Report. Now in its tenth year, this annual report is widely recognized as the repository of the world's most reliable and impartial data and analysis on the state of global telecommunication/ICT sector. It aims to stimulate the ICT policy debate by providing an objective assessment of countries' ICT performance based on internationally comparable data and agreed methodologies and by highlighting areas that need further improvement.

The release of this report follows the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where ITU Member States approved the four-year Strategic and Financial Plan, which includes a strong commitment to ITU's statistical work. The Plan also includes a number of specific targets in terms of ICT access and use, which this report reviews.

The Measuring the Information Society Report 2018 reveals that by the end of 2018, we will have passed a critical point as, for the first time, more than half the world's population will be using the Internet. This is a significant achievement towards a more inclusive information society that delivers new opportunities of development through ICTs. It is an important step towards leaving no one behind.

The report finds that there continues to be a general upward trend in the access to and use of ICTs. With the exception of fixed telephony, all indicators showed sustained growth over the last decade. Mobile access to basic telecommunication service is becoming ever more predominant. Broadband access continues to demonstrate sustained growth with mobile broadband penetration increasing from 4.0 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2007 to close to 70 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2018. In addition, most people worldwide can now access the Internet through a 3G or higher-speed network.

One of the reasons for the upward trend is that access to and use of ICTs have become more affordable, with a global drop in prices for mobile-cellular, mobile-broadband and fixed-broadband. However, for people to effectively use ICTs, there is an increased need for soft skills beyond technical and navigational skills, fundamental for achieving positive outcomes. More and better data are needed so that digital skills policies can address gaps in the labour market and concerns about widening social inequalities.

In 2017, ITU Member States agreed to a revised and expanded set of indicators for the ICT Development Index (IDI). The new IDI, based on the new indicators, promises to deliver an even better understanding of developments, opportunities and challenges within ITU Member States and the ICT industry at large. In order to smoothen the transition for Member States in terms of data collection, the IDI, which is normally included in the Measuring the Information Society Report, will only be launched in 2019.

As in the 2017 edition, Volume 2 of the Measuring the Information Society Report provides information on countries infrastructure developments, investments, government policies and initiatives to improve the access and use of ICTs for households and individuals. These profiles will help to identify good practices as well as opportunities specific to each country.

This report will be of great value to the ITU membership, including policy-makers, the ICT industry and others working towards building an inclusive digital economy.

Brahima Sanou
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# Acknowledgements

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The report was edited by Michael Gibson, consultant to ITU, with the assistance of the English Language Section. The desktop publishing was carried out by the ITU Publication Production Service, led by Simon De Nicola, and the cover was designed by Ahone Njume-Ebong. Administrative support was provided by Mihaela Cekovic, Juliet Nkurunziza and Terry Braley.

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