

Measuring digital development ICT price trends 2020



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Foreword



ICT price trends 2020 is a key element of our *Measuring digital development* series of statistical and analytical publications. In the current context, with the global pandemic continuing to impose severe constraints on people's ability to go about their normal business, connectivity represents a lifeline, a way to ensure some level of continuity in critical activities, including working and learning. Yet today, this lifeline remains out of reach of almost half the world's population. The cost of connecting contributes to explaining why some 3.7 billion people have never gone online. And for many of the 4 billion or so people who *are* online, high costs are preventing many from harnessing the full potential of the online world.

This annual publication presents, analyses and compares the prices of ICT services for more than 200 economies, providing unique and invaluable insight into the state of ICT affordability around the world. Crucially, it informs on progress made by countries towards achieving the United Nations Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development affordability target for 2025, according to which entry-level broadband services should be made available in developing countries at a level corresponding to less than 2 per cent of monthly gross national income per capita.

This year's report reveals that, overall, ICT services have become more affordable. In many countries, however, entry-level broadband services remain prohibitively expensive, and the 2 per cent target a distant prospect. This edition features new measures of affordability that also reveal vast, persisting disparities *within* countries, showing that, even where the target has been met for a country as a whole, entry-level broadband services often remain out of reach for the poorest. In this context, there is no room for complacency.

This publication is the culmination of a massive data collection effort led by ITU in collaboration with the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) and the administrations of Member States around the world. I thank them all for their collaboration, and am grateful for their invaluable support.

The COVID-19 global health emergency has made us all acutely aware of the vital importance of broadband networks to social and economic prosperity and global development. I hope this authoritative report serves as a crucial pillar of renewed efforts to urgently drive down costs and make digital services more affordable, and thus more available, to all people of the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' and 'B'.

Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau
International Telecommunication Union

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