

beMUN 2022 Online

COMMITTEE: Department of Economic and Social Affairs

TOPIC: Leveraging of technologies for digital inclusion

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: English

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In this committee, we as an international organization, are going to discuss the topic “Leveraging technologies for Digital inclusion“. In this introduction we will let you know the most refutable points to carry out a better development within the committee.

Leaving no one behind means leaving no one out of line. The exponential rise of e-commerce has created new jobs and income-generating opportunities, which have the potential to boost household income, lift people out of poverty, and increase the resilience of rural communities, however, Half of the world's population, approximately 3.7 billion people, do not use the Internet. Although the number of people online has increased rapidly in recent years, especially due to the pandemic, there are important differences between regions and countries.

Disadvantaged and marginalized groups are already overrepresented in the offline population, which is disproportionately female, rural, poor, elderly, and/or those with limited education and literacy, so things like location, income, age , gender, ethnicity, and disability are important predictors of communication access.

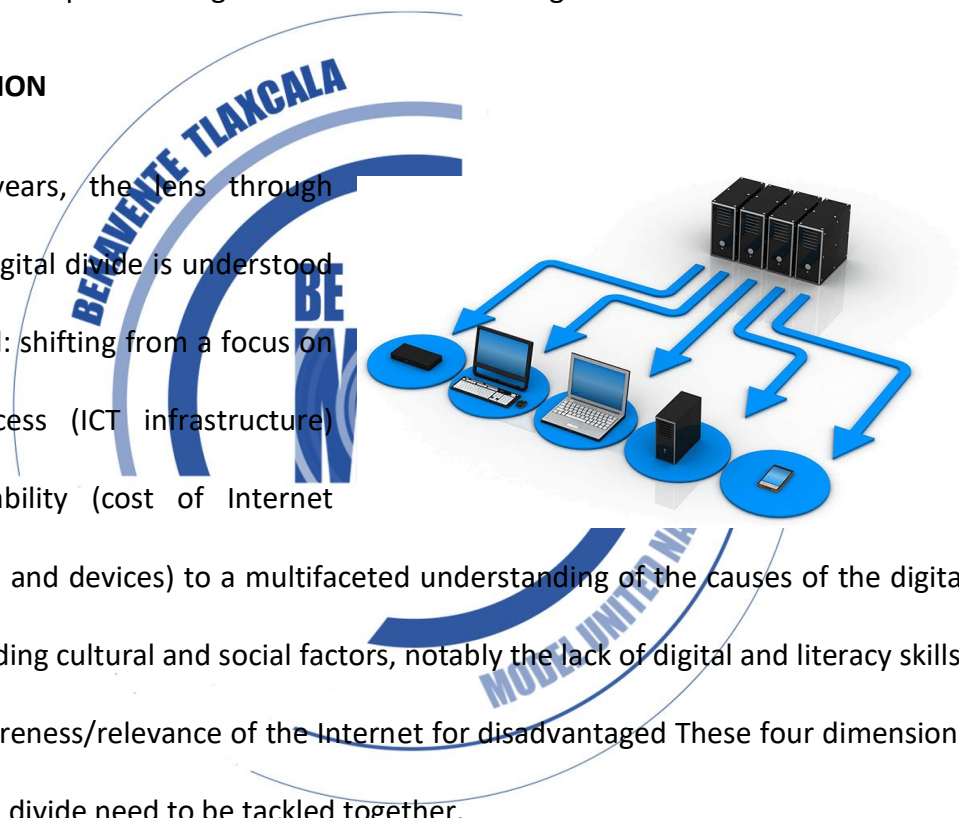
Therefore, taking into consideration aspects such as the digitization of the provision of essential public services, social protection, digital finance, safe and easy access to the internet is absolutely essential to take advantage of the full potential of digital technologies. Given the intrinsic interconnectedness between the digital divide and existing socioeconomic inequality, there is a need to intensify efforts to address the digital divide and promote digital inclusion around the globe.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the lens through which the digital divide is understood has widened: shifting from a focus on physical access (ICT infrastructure) and affordability (cost of Internet connection and devices) to a multifaceted understanding of the causes of the digital divide, including cultural and social factors, notably the lack of digital and literacy skills, and the awareness/relevance of the Internet for disadvantaged. These four dimensions of the digital divide need to be tackled together.

With this in mind, there is a clear need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to close the digital divide by promoting digital inclusion, based on a commonly agreed framework as well as specific indicators and metrics.

To date, global and national digital indexes tend to disproportionately focus on dimensions of access and usage, and rarely cover the dimensions of digital skills and supportive environment. Similarly, most digital indexes are not broken down by age



group, gender, and geographical location (Digital Future Society, 2019). As these recommendations are taken forward through a multi-stakeholder process, practical tools can help provide

policymakers and all other actors to identify “pockets” of digital exclusion, where efforts are falling short.

Creating more comprehensive digital inclusion indicators has implications for the collection of disaggregated data, multiplying their complexity and associated costs. An avenue that could be further explored is to make better use of usage data connected to the private sector which provides information not only on access but also digital skills development.



Rapid technological change without an inclusive and sustainable development strategic orientation risks entrenching existing inequalities while introducing new

ones. Shaping a shared vision on digital cooperation and a digital future must become a priority. Given the unprecedented extent to which our world relies on digital tools for prosperity and connectivity, only a shared vision for a safe, open and free digital world can unlock the full potential of technology and address concerns over digital trust and security.

Strategies to enhance digital cooperation need to be strengthened. Ensuring that technology products, policies, and practices comply with human rights principles and standards, notably the right to privacy.

Governments and inter-governmental organizations are uniquely placed to support open and transparent public debates on digital issues, in order to develop regulatory frameworks and policies that leverage digital technologies for sustainable development and support digital inclusion.

CURRENT SITUATION

The digital inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups including, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, people on the move, and indigenous peoples, also requires targeted and multifaceted measures.

These include, identifying and amending exclusionary policies and systems, raising awareness of the digital divide, and combating stereotypes through more empowering images of women,



older persons, and other marginalized groups in the digital realm. Measures designed specifically to close gender gaps may include establishing gender responsive national broadband plans, closing the digital skills gap through education, establishing gender-friendly public Internet access and training venues.

As countries seek to lay the foundations for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies, closing the digital divide will be essential. While digital inclusion alone is not a 'silver bullet' in the fight against poverty and inequality, it has become a fundamental component of promoting social inclusion. As such, digital inclusion is

central to Member States' commitment to leave no one behind and enable a socially just transition towards a more inclusive, equitable, resilient and sustainable future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically accelerated the digitalization of economies and societies. Access to digital technologies has allowed us to continue to work, learn and live, but the global health crisis has exposed existing gaps and inequalities for the 2.9 billion people who are not using the Internet.

Although most of the world's population lives in areas covered by a broadband network, only two-thirds are online. Cost, not coverage, is the barrier to connectivity. In low-income countries, home to 650 million people, mobile broadband is 18 times more expensive than in developed countries – as a proportion of average income. Even in the most advanced nations, affordable usage of broadband remains a challenge.

CONTROVERSIAL POINTS





- An estimated 37 percent of the world's population or 2.9 billion people, have still never used the Internet. An estimated 96 percent live in developing

countries. And even among the 4.9 billion counted as 'Internet users', many hundreds of millions may only get the chance to go online infrequently, via shared devices, or using connectivity speeds that markedly limit the usefulness of their connection.

- The digital gender divide is narrowing globally, but large gaps remain in poorer countries.
- The urban-rural gap, though less severe in developed countries, remains a major challenge for digital connectivity in the rest of the world.
- ITU continues monitoring the world's evolving digital divide.
- COVID-19 has brought a new-found sense of urgency for digital inclusion. Having access to affordable digital services is no longer a luxury but a necessity.

COUNTRIES INVOLVED

B: Index rankings
The top 10 countries and top 10 improvers of the 82 nations assessed

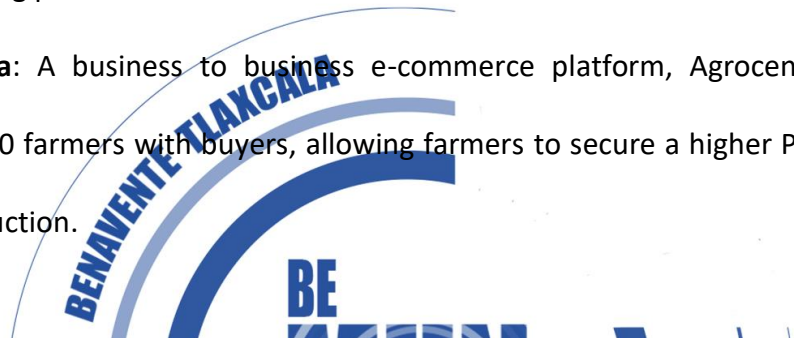
TOP 10 COUNTRIES 			TOP 10 IMPROVERS 		
# 1	Singapore	-	# 55	Myanmar	+11
# 2	Sweden	-	# 44	Vietnam	+10
# 3	Denmark	+2	# 50	Egypt	+8
# 4	Netherlands	-1	# 14	UAE	+8
# 5	United States	-1	# 8	Qatar	+8
# 6	Australia	-	# 74	Zambia	+7
# 7	South Korea	-	# 64	Pakistan	+7
# 8	Qatar	+5	# 57	Cambodia	+7
# 9	Canada	+5	# 9	Canada	+7
# 10	United Kingdom	-2	# 37	Iran	+7

Source: Roland Berger

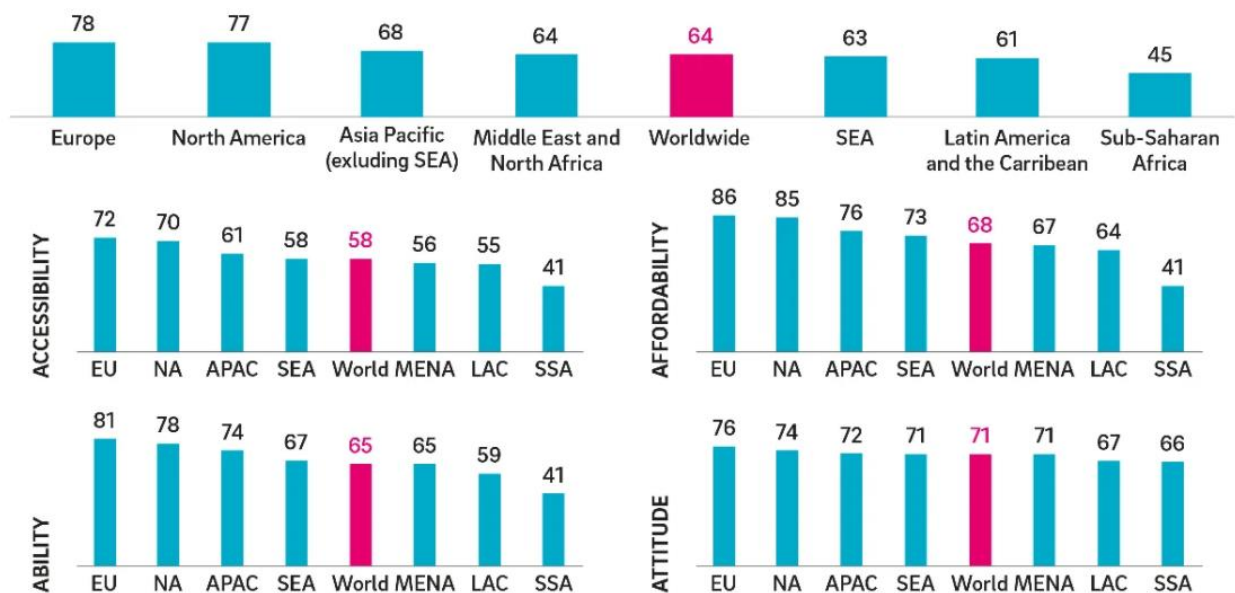
The previous image shows the countries that are leaders in digital inclusion currently, besides giving an insight according to the Roland Berger rubrics on how other countries

have improved digital inclusiveness in their countries from 2017 to 2020 in several categories such as accessibility and affordability from the 82 countries in their digital inclusion index.

- **China:** e-commerce is helping to revitalize rural villages by widening market Access for rural producers
- **Chile:** The ministry of agriculture has set up digital platforms to promote family farming products
- **Ghana:** A business to business e-commerce platform, Agrocenta, connects 10,000 farmers with buyers, allowing farmers to secure a higher Price for their production.



Regional scores for digital inclusion



Source Roland Berger index on GSMA, ITU, World Bank, UNESCO, UNDP, Euromonitor, Ookla

- **Luxemburg:** The Luxembourg government has established an online/phone sales platform "Letzshop" that offers home delivery of more than 40 essential items to vulnerable people, including people over 65 and people suffering from chronic diseases.
- **Africa:** Only 6.3% of households in rural areas have internet access at home, compared to 28% in urban areas.

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