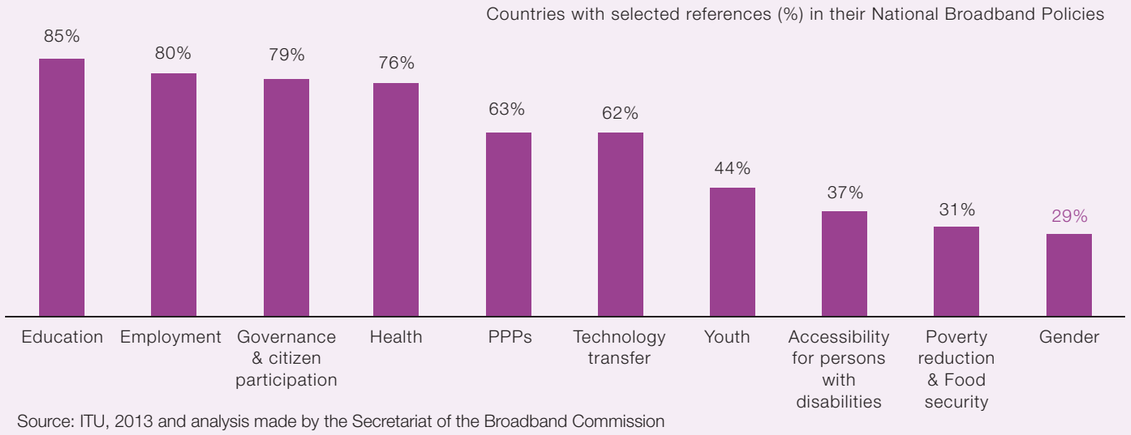
FIGURE 3: RANKING OF REFERENCES TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION FOUND IN NATIONAL BROADBAND POLICIES



Source: ITU, 2013 and analysis made by the Secretariat of the Broadband Commission

- Finally, only four countries included elements related to the use of ICTs to promote *women's role in decision making.* Malawi aims at putting in place policy instruments to ensure the participation of women in the formulation of ICT policies, and to ensure these policies are geared towards meeting specific developmental needs of women. Mexico indicates that achieving digital inclusion will be a vehicle to increase women's role in politics.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STEPS:

- The ITU report, *World in 2013: ICT Facts and Figures*, confirmed that access to ICT is not gender equal, especially in developing countries. Additionally, the results of this review show that very few national broadband policies (only 29%) incorporate relevant references, actions and goals to address this issue. Unless the current scenario changes it is unlikely that the ICT gender gap will diminish in the near future. Positive action is needed to strengthen the linkage between national policies to promote gender equality and ICT policy making, in particular as the role of technology was highlighted in the outcomes of the Rio+20 conference as a key element to provide equal rights and opportunities to women.

- The review also indicates an overall lack of measurable targets across the range of broadband policies reviewed. Concrete objectives help measure the implementation of policies, and countries should be stimulated to define specific targets in future. A call to action on the part of international and regional organizations is needed to help incorporate verifiable targets and to establish tools and processes to support the assessment of progress towards meeting those targets.

- Finally, an evaluation of the achievement of the targets identified in the policy documents reviewed thus far has been identified as a valuable next step. This work could be undertaken in the context of the UN system's Post-2015 discussions.

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GENDER IN NATIONAL BROADBAND POLICIES

DISCUSSION PAPER BY THE BROADBAND COMMISSION SECRETARIAT
MARCH 2013

GENDER EQUALITY IN ICTs

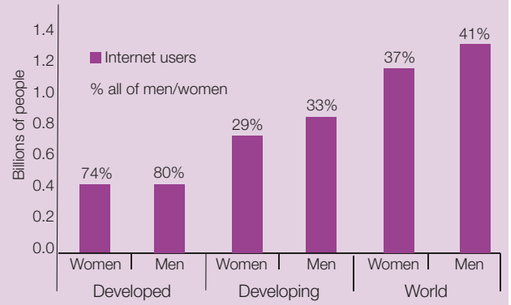
THE GENDER DIVIDE IS REFLECTED IN THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SECTOR IN A NUMBER OF KEY AREAS:

- The first is the lack of equal access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) for women. In its report *The World in 2013: ICT Facts and Figures* ITU highlighted that globally, 37% of women have access to the Internet compared to 41% of men (see Figure 1).

- The ICT gender gap is illustrated not only in women's lack of access to the technology, but also in their limited presence in the ICT sector, in terms of jobs, number of women in management, ownership etc. There is growing recognition for the role of broadband and ICTs in empowering women. Empowered women are better informed, financially more independent and able to make better decisions for themselves and their families. By providing women with such tools policy makers therefore have the opportunity to affect a much broader base, since women are more likely to take time to inform others and reflect such knowledge in family and community planning.

- The aforementioned benefits of broadband for social and economic development are more likely to be extended to all sectors of the population if supported by clear policy leadership and strategic frameworks. This is evidenced by the *Broadband Commission for Digital Development*, which included "*Making broadband policy universal*" as one of the four Broadband Advocacy Targets for 2015, agreed at the 2011 Broadband Leadership Summit. Moreover, ICT policies which comprise a gender perspective can achieve the double purpose of ensuring digital inclusion of women and exploiting the potential of ICTs for gender inclusion and empowerment in other sectors.

FIGURE 1: THE ICT GENDER GAP 2013

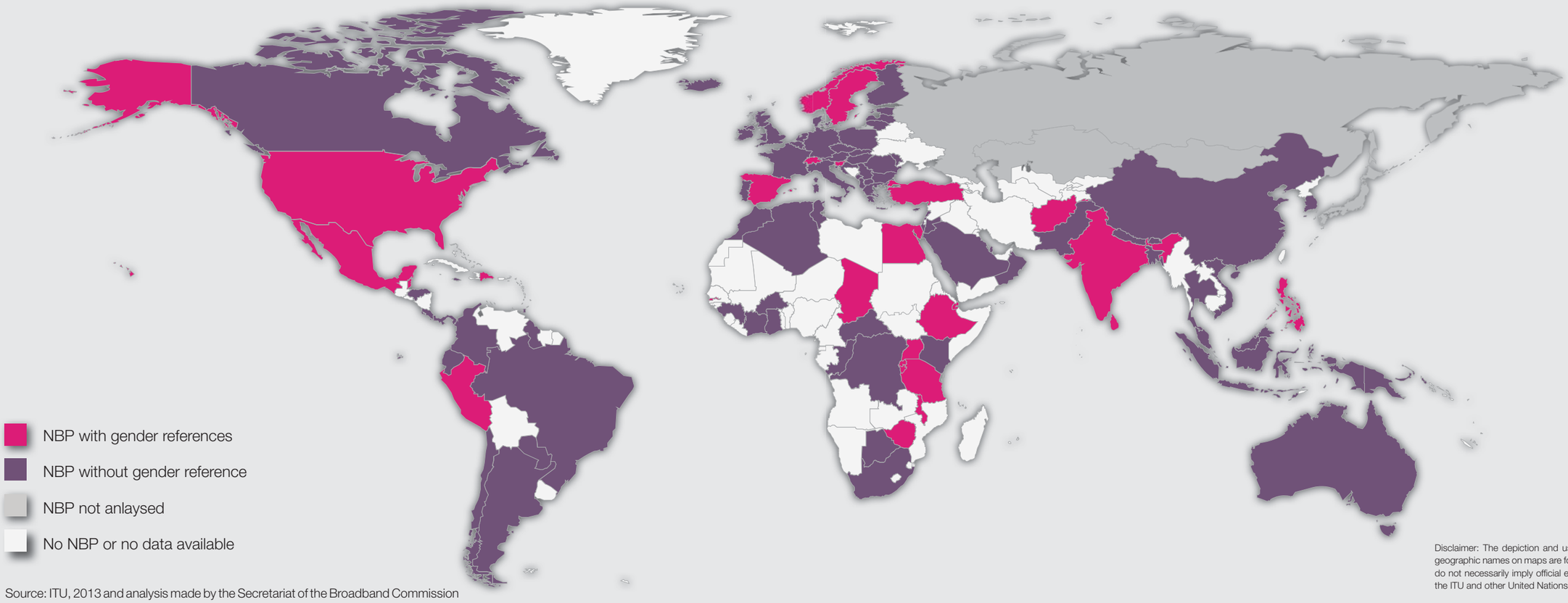


See: http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict

Source: ITU

By the end of 2011 there were 119 countries with national broadband policies, which represents 62% of all countries.

FIGURE 2: OVERVIEW OF INCLUSION OF GENDER IN NATIONAL BROADBAND POLICIES (NBP) 2013



Source: ITU, 2013 and analysis made by the Secretariat of the Broadband Commission

Disclaimer: The depiction and use of national boundaries and geographic names on maps are for illustrative purposes only and do not necessarily imply official endorsement or acceptance by the ITU and other United Nations agencies.

REFERENCES TO GENDER IN NATIONAL BROADBAND POLICIES

The Broadband Commission Secretariat analyzed references to gender in selected national broadband strategies. The results of the review show that only 29% (30 total) of the plans analyzed included relevant references to gender. This figure contrasts with the inclusion of references to other elements in the same policies (see Figure 3), such as education (with 85% referenced), employment (80% referenced) or health (76% referenced).

References to gender can further be grouped into 4 distinct categories:

- Overall, *ICT training for women* is the most common category with a total of 17 references in the plans analyzed. These references demonstrate countries' willingness to remove gender barriers to ICT education and training and to eradicate digital illiteracy amongst women and girls. Furthermore, half of the countries formulated measurable targets in this area. A relevant example is the Dominican Republic which aims to achieve a 50% digital literacy rate for women, within a four year timeframe. Other country-level targets are more focussed, and refer to the development of specific ICT training centres and programs. For example, Chad´s plan aims at developing 18 such training centres within a four year timeframe.

- The second most referenced category addresses *equal access to ICTs for women*. Several countries refer to improved access to ICTs in general. An example is Zimbabwe which wants to ensure equity in access to and the use of ICTs across all sectors of the economy. Others refer more specifically to enhanced access to PCs and/or Internet — Egypt outlines actions to equip girls' schools with PCs. Chad has defined concrete goals to measure progress in this area by outlining administrative and fiscal measures to achieve ICT gender equality, and to develop a favorable legal framework within two years.

- Fourteen countries refer to *ICTs for women's empowerment*. ICTs create new avenues for the upliftment of women as they provide them with access to knowledge and pedagogic content, and facilitate telecommuting to allow better family-work balance. In this regard, Gambia commits to increase the proportion of women involved in the ICT sector and industry, targeting their level of involvement in terms of ownership and management of ICT businesses.

4 Categories of gender references in National Broadband policies:

1. Actions to increase women's ICT skills;
2. Actions to provide equal access to ICTs for women (promoting digital inclusion);
3. Actions to promote female empowerment through broadband and ICTs; and
4. Actions to promote women's role in decision making (government, private sector) through ICT use.