Overview

BROADBAND COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

bbcommission@itu.int | broadbandcommission.org | New York, Paris, and Geneva
The Commission's **mission** is to bridge the digital divide and bring the goal of universal connectivity to the forefront of policy discussions through the facilitation of impactful public-private partnerships, thought leadership and actionable policy recommendations.

The Commission acts as a UN advocacy engine for the implementation of the UNSG’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and leverages the strength of its membership and collective expertise to advocate for meaningful, safe, secure, and sustainable broadband communications services that are reflective of human and children’s rights.
OUR MISSION

OUR FOUR DEFINING PILLARS:

CONNECTIVITY
Universal & resilient connectivity

KNOWLEDGE
Equal access to digital services to inform, educate and enable knowledge societies

ACCESS
Affordable (services and devices), safe, secure and sustained access for all

SKILLS
Continuous development of digital competencies and capacity building
We envision a fully connected world that harnesses the power of broadband to achieve the SDGs by 2030.
The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development is led by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Carlos Slim Helù of Mexico and is co-chaired by ITU's Secretary-General Houlin Zhao and UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay. Launched by ITU and UNESCO in 2010 to advocate for the power of broadband to drive sustainable development, it is comprised of over 50 Commissioners representing a cross-cutting group of top CEOs and industry leaders, senior policymakers and government representatives, and experts from international agencies, academia and organizations concerned with development.
Establishing a baseline for universal digital connectivity
Identifying and supporting public-private financing of universal broadband, pioneering innovative hybrid and/or complementary, replicable and sustainable financing and investment models for all types of networks, and catalyzing impactful partnerships
Advocating for enabling ICT regulatory environments, ICT capacity building and online safety and security, especially for children, as integral to efforts to achieve the Global Broadband Targets 2025 and the SDGs.
To connect the unconnected, the Broadband Commission is committed to strengthening global digital cooperation and addressing this massive gap that leaves nearly half of the world’s population – in both developed and developing nations – unable to benefit from a connected world for human and community development.

In order to connect the unconnected, the Commission has established 7 ambitious targets for 2025, which seek to expand broadband infrastructure, and internet access and use by populations around the world, as necessary intermediate steps towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Progress towards achieving these targets is tracked through the annual flagship publication: The State of Broadband Report.

The Commission’s targets are aligned with the UNSG’s Roadmap and consistent with, and mutually reinforcing of, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 9(c) on universal connectivity.
Celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2020, the Commission's sustained advocacy efforts over the past decade have borne fruit across the global community as mindsets have changed in recognizing that ICTs and broadband are critical ‘prerequisites’ for economic and social development, rather than just mere potential ‘enablers’.

Since 2010, the Commission has been on the leading edge, advocating for policies that can lead to universal and affordable broadband Internet access. The annual flagship State of Broadband reports since 2012 have presented over 75 recommendations for stakeholders to take action. The range of unique messaging cover the following critical areas:

- **Policy and ICT Enabling Environments**
- **Connectivity and Digital Infrastructure**
- **Equal Access & Digital Inclusion**
- **ICT Skills and Use**
- **Investment and Financing**
Our approach must be ‘people-centred’ – strong on affordability, service levels, content. This will involve moving beyond mindsets focused on technological fixes and focusing on those user issues that limit adoption – socio-demographics, skills, affordability, relevance, content and trust.

Joint actions and hands-on, replicable solutions are required to direct funding to address the challenges of the unconnected, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

This report details the current state of play, lessons learned from the pandemic, progress on meeting the Broadband Commission’s 2025 targets & the SDGs, and policy recommendations for a people-centred approach to achieving universal connectivity by 2030.
Working Groups are at the heart of the work being done at the Broadband Commission to advance the 2030 UN Agenda
With more than 30 groups to date, the Broadband Commission’s Working Groups convene industry leaders, government officials and civil society throughout the year to address prominent issues affecting broadband access, affordability and use. Working Groups are proposed, chaired and led by Commissioners, with the support of external experts.
In September 2021, the Broadband Commission published three new Working Group papers on Digital Learning, Epidemic Management, and 21st Century Financing Models.

**Working Group on Digital Learning**

Hybrid learning should be a viable option for students, requiring deliberate planning, informed decision-making and substantial investment.

**Working Group on Epidemic Management**

Based on 15 country case studies, the executive summary provides recommendations for global cooperation, preemptive investment, and flexible ICT policy.

**Working Group on 21st Century Financing Models**

The executive summary offers strategic recommendations for funding universal connectivity, with a focus on broadening the base of contributors, earmarking proceeds from ICT sector participants, reforming (USAFs), and creating an international fund.
The Commission has been instrumental in launching global initiatives:
1. EQUALS: the ITU, UNESCO, ITC, GSMA and UN Women Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age
2. Giga: the ITU and UNICEF Global Initiative to Connect Every School to Internet by 2030
3. Child Online Safety Universal Declaration

The Commission also coordinates and partners with other relevant international leader level platforms such as:
- UNSG Roadmap for Digital Cooperation
- ITU Partner to Connect P2C
- Office of UNSG's Envoy on Technology
- WEF EDISON Alliance
- The Education Commission

The Broadband Commission contributes inputs to UNSG's Our Common Agenda 2021, 5th UN LDC5 Conference, UN-HLPF, and WSIS
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