Gender and data gaps in ICT use and ownership

United Nations 10th Global Forum on Gender Statistics* | *3 October 2025

Nathan Menton, ITU Data and Analytics Division

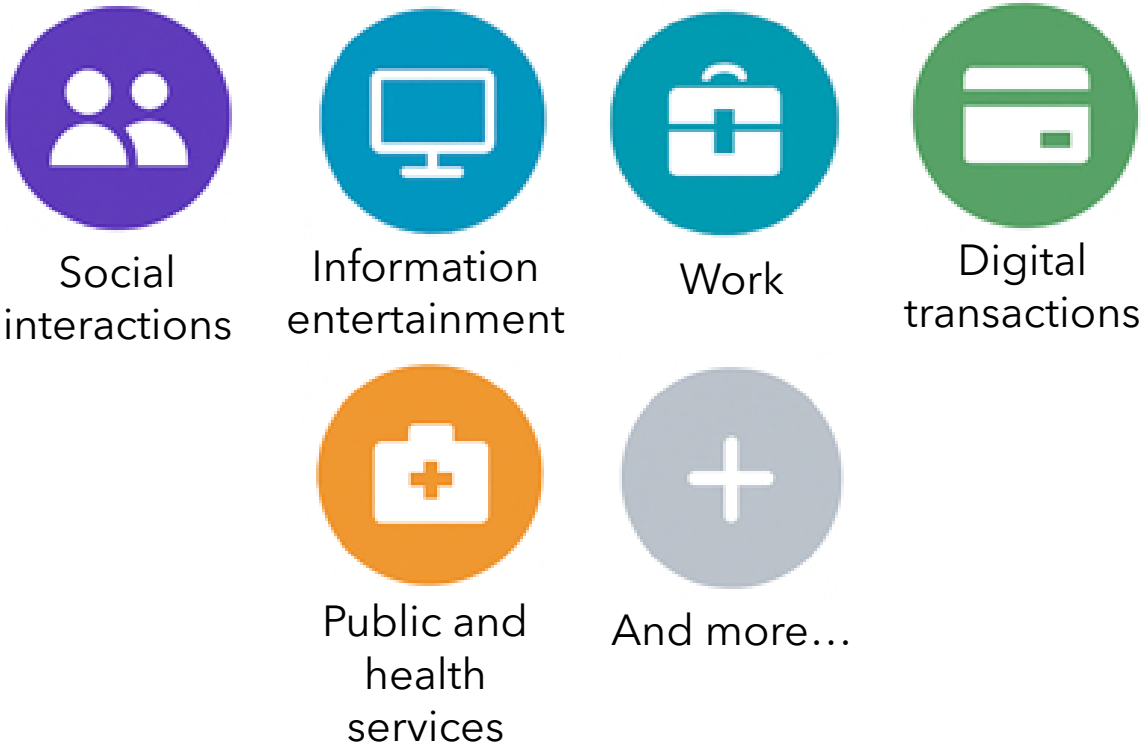
Digital technologies play an integral role in society

96%

covered by mobile-broadband network

68%

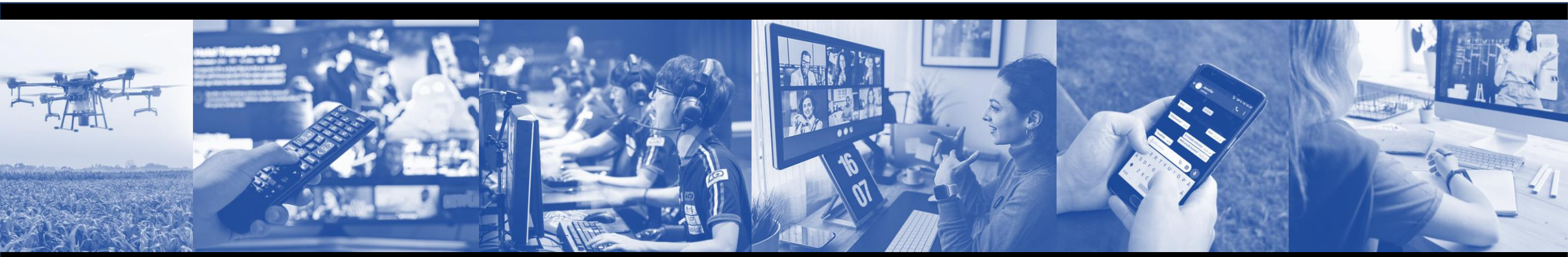
using the Internet



All have important gender dimensions

Universal and Meaningful Connectivity (UMC)

> The possibility for everyone to enjoy a safe, satisfying, enriching, productive, online experience at an affordable cost.



Breadth of ITU data collection

Three main areas

ITU collects, verifies, harmonizes, and analyses telecommunication/ICT statistics – more than 200 economies worldwide

Household

Includes indicators on:

- Household access to television, computer, Internet
- Individual Internet use (overall, by frequency, activity)
- Mobile phone ownership and use
- ICT skills
- Disaggregated by **gender**, education level and others

Administrative

Includes indicators on:

- Mobile-broadband coverage, by type
- Mobile- and fixed-broadband subscriptions
- Bandwidth use

Prices

Price baskets for

- Data-only mobile-broadband
- Fixed-broadband
- Mobile data and voice (high and low consumption)
- Mobile voice and SMS (low usage)

Core list of ICT indicators on access to, and use of, ICT by households and individuals

HH1	Households with a radio
HH2	Households with a TV
HH3	Households with telephone
HH4	Households with a computer
HH5	Individuals using a computer
HH6	Households with Internet
HH7	Individuals using the Internet *
HH8	Individuals using the Internet, by location
HH9	Individuals using the Internet, by type of activity
HH10	Individuals using a mobile cellular telephone
HH11	Households with Internet, by type of service
HH12	Individuals using the Internet, by frequency
HH13	Households with multichannel television, by type
HH14	Barriers to household Internet access
HH15	Individuals with ICT skills, by type of skills *
HH16	Household expenditure on ICT
HH17	Individuals using the Internet, by type of portable device and network used to access the Internet
HH18	Individuals who own a mobile phone *
HH19	Individuals not using the Internet, by type of reason
HH20	Individuals who purchased goods or services online, by type of good and service purchased
HH21	Individuals who purchased goods or services online, by type of payment channel
HH22	Individuals who purchased goods or services online, by method of delivery
HH23	Individuals who did not purchase goods or services online, by type of reason

**** Sustainable Development Goal***

Revised regularly by Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators (EGH)

UN Sustainable Development Goals

Target 17.8

Indicator 17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet

Via fixed or mobile network and irrespective of the device used

Target 4.4

Indicator 4.4.1 Individuals with ICT skills, by type of skills (youth and adults)

Collected through 20 indicators organized into 5 skill areas

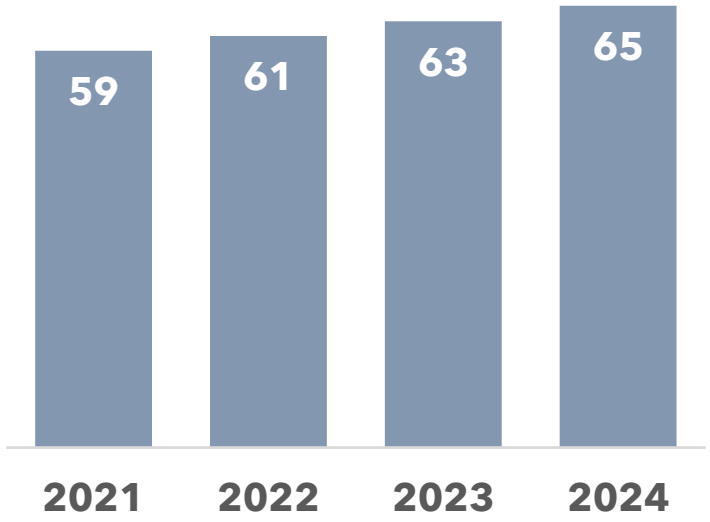
- Communication and collaboration
- Digital content creation
- Information and data literacy
- Problem solving
- Safety

Target 5.b

Indicator 5.b.1. Proportion of individuals who own a mobile phone (by gender)

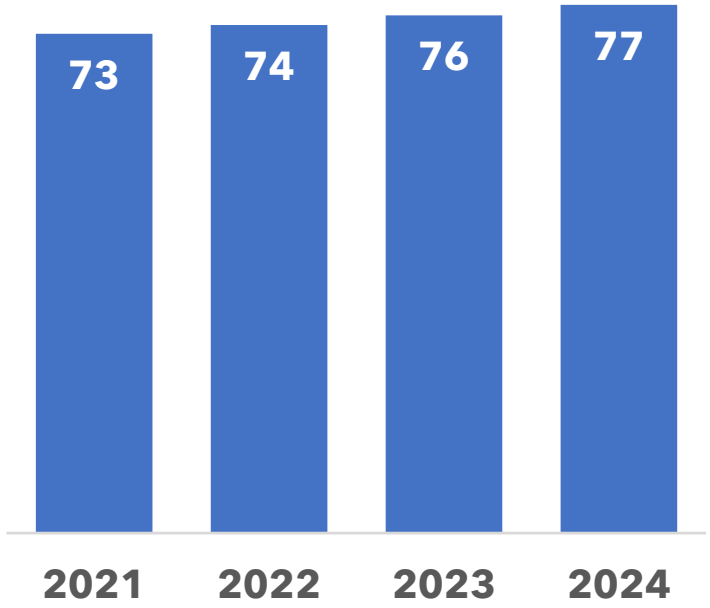
Mobile phone ownership = having a mobile cellular phone device with at least one active SIM card for personal use.

Growth continues in share of women using/owning ICTs…



Share of women using the Internet* has increased by **11 per cent** since 2021

Mobile phone ownership** higher but increasing more slowly, by **6 per cent** since 2021



** In last three months*
*** Aged 10 and older*
ITU estimates

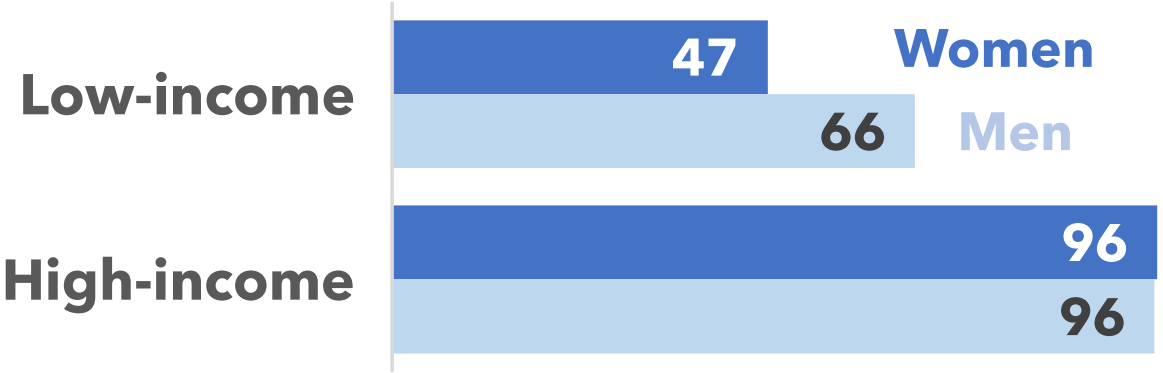
…but a small and persistent gender gap remains

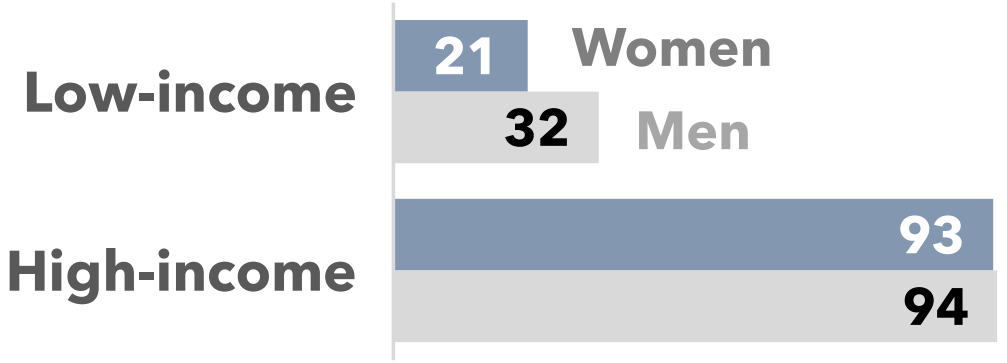
Women are **6 per cent less likely** to use the Internet as men …

…with a **similar gap** in mobile phone ownership

...with larger gaps in lower income countries

Internet use gender gap is **wide** in low-income countries and minimal in high-income countries...



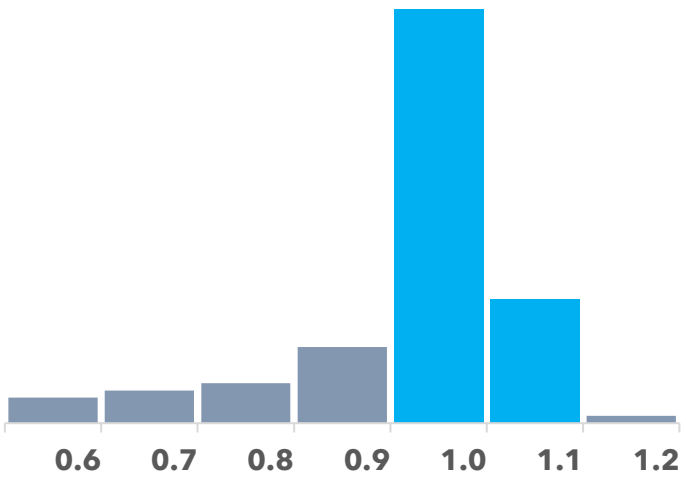


...with this difference **more evident** for mobile phone ownership

2024 ITU estimates
** Female share / male share*

Much disparity between countries

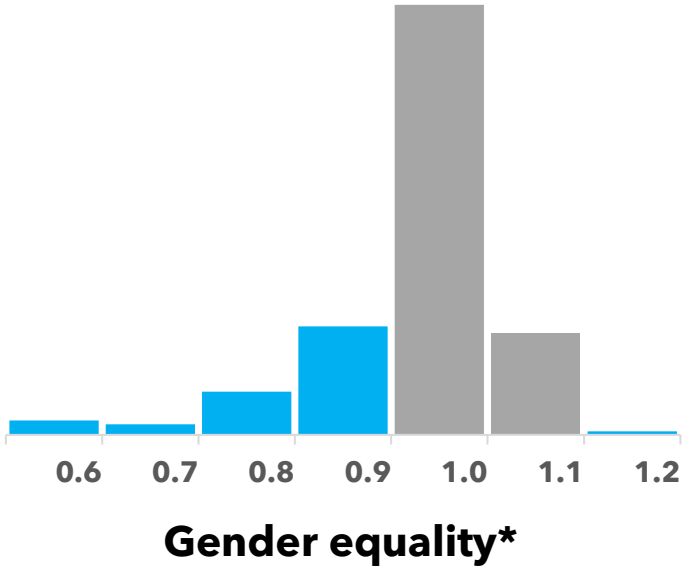
Distribution of Internet use gender gaps



Near gender equality for women using the Internet in **75 per cent** of countries

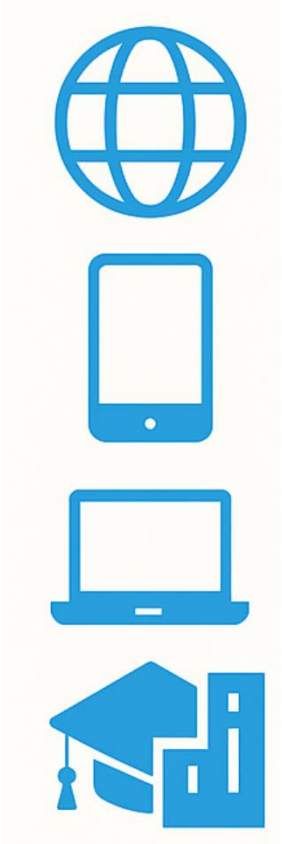
Near gender equality for women in mobile phone ownership in **75 per cent** of countries

Distribution of mobile phone ownership gender gaps



Extreme gender inequality remains in other countries

Diving deeper - gender gaps are modest**



Small differences overall | Internet use, digital skills, mobile phone ownership, barriers to use, online activities

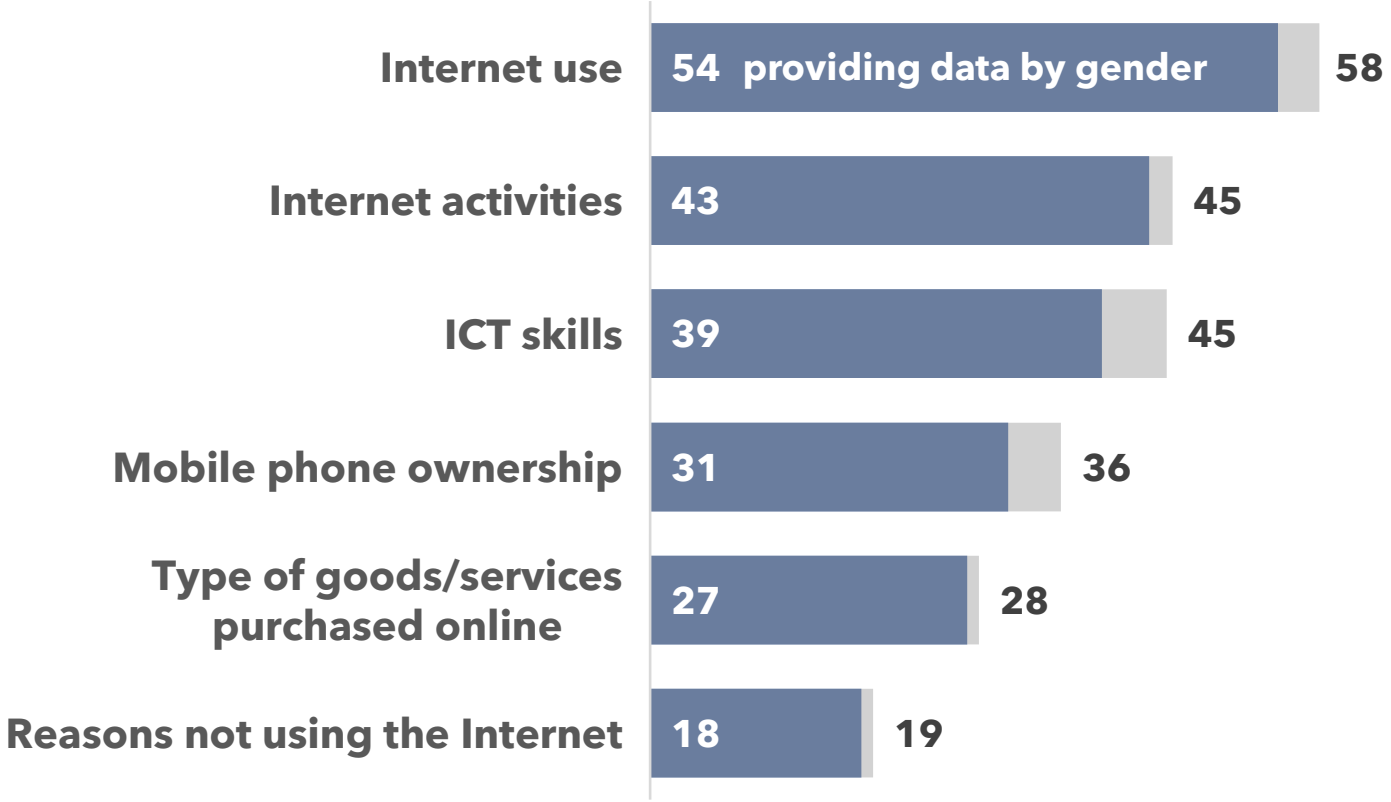
Education and residency account for greater divides

Gender gap relatively stable across other factors | Education level, rural/urban residency

**BUT data skewed toward wealthier countries with higher ICT adoption

Data gaps

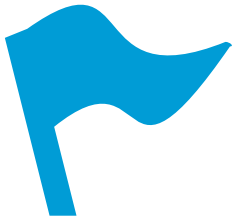
Share of countries providing data on ICT indicators since 2020



Fewer than **60 per cent** of countries have provided data on Internet use since 2020

Even fewer for other important indicators

Data are incomplete for many countries



43%

Share of ITU member states missing gender data for recent years*

18%

Share of World population for countries missing gender data

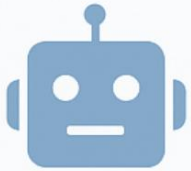
64%

Share of low- and lower-middle-income countries missing gender data

High cost and complexity of conducting household surveys

* 2020 or later, any ICT indicator

Emerging topics in ICT statistics



AI use | **New access, skills, opportunities**

Digital well-being | **Gendered patterns**

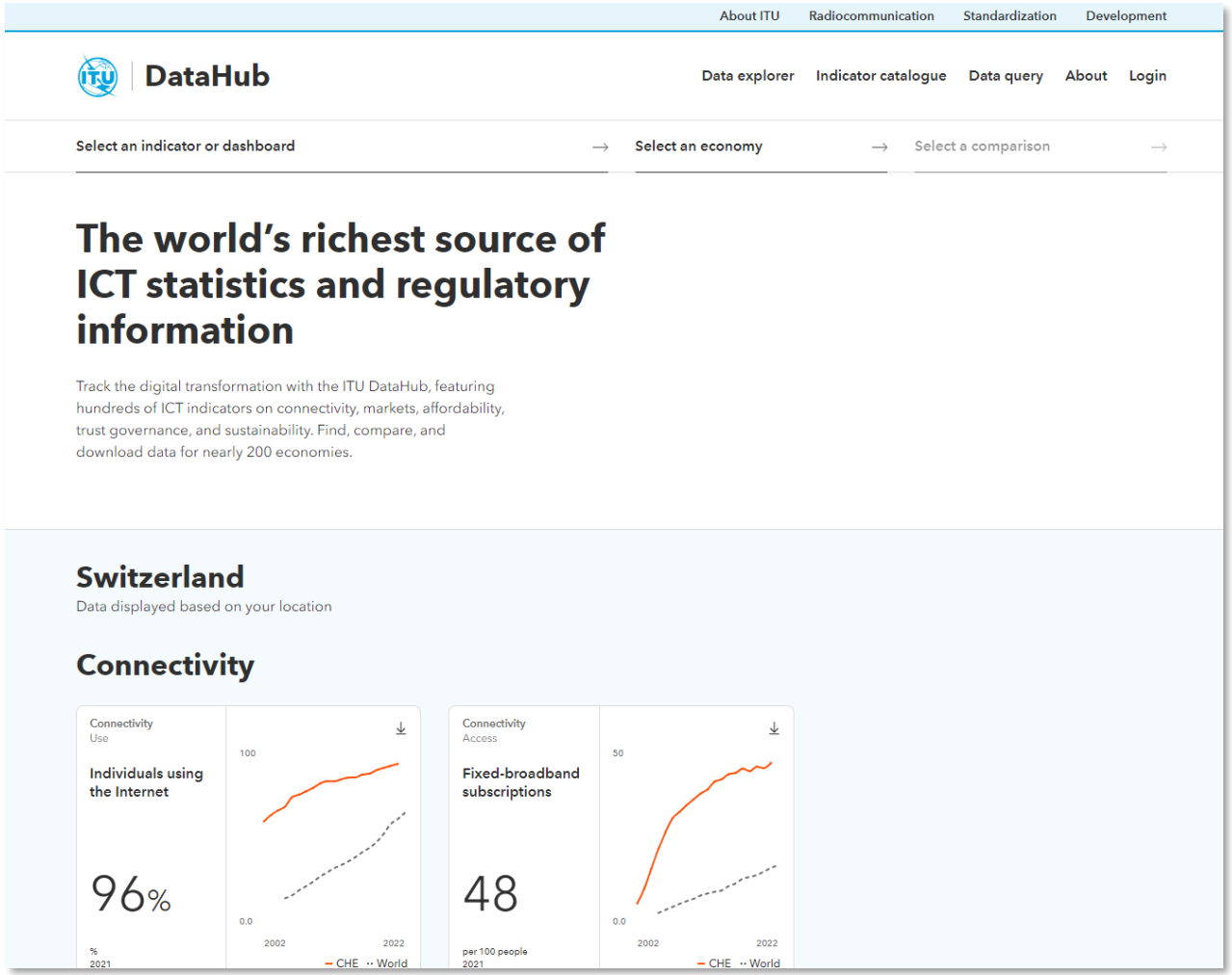
Cybercrime | **Higher risks of abuse for women?**

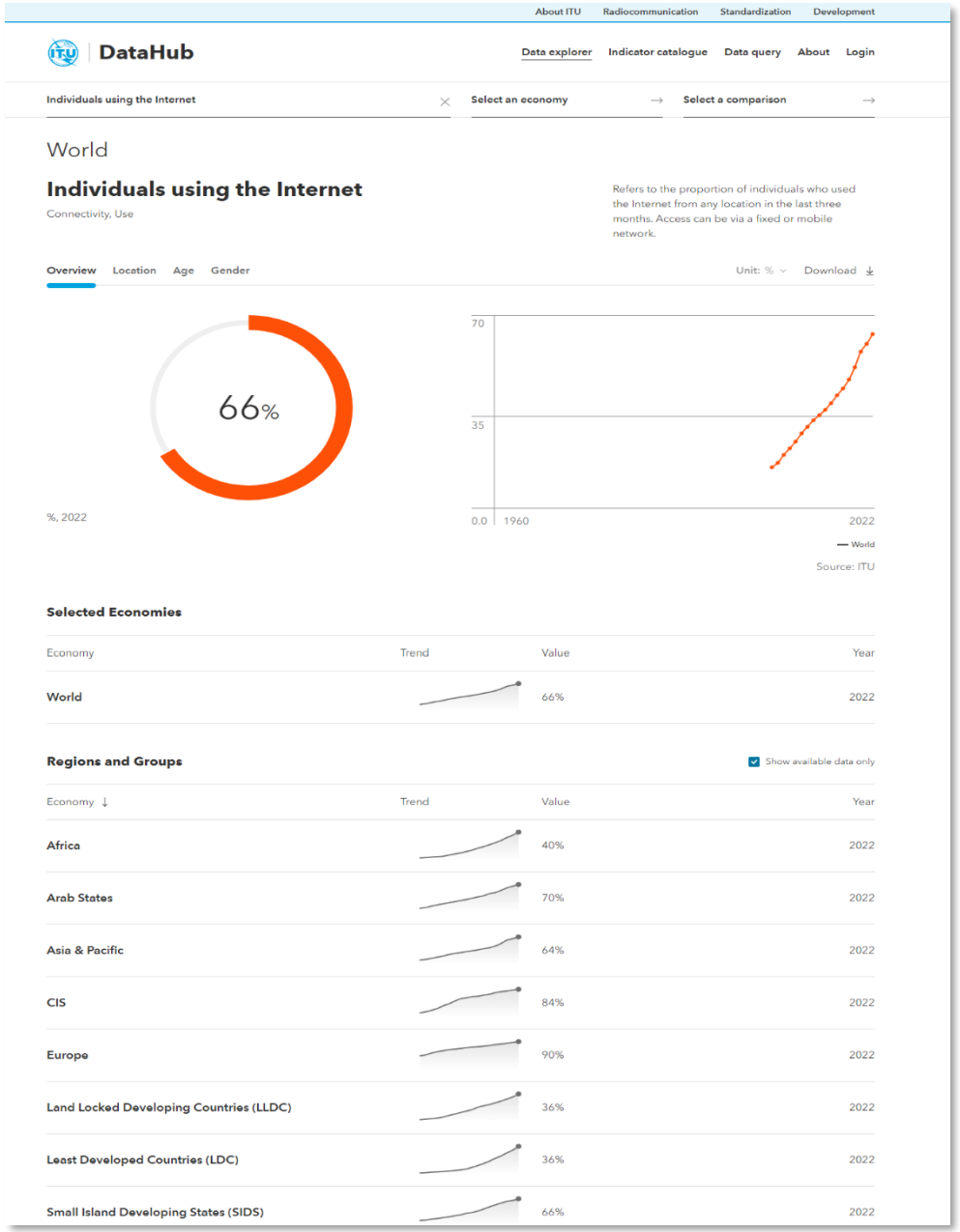
Small-area estimation | **Regions within countries requiring interventions?**

Coordination and harmonization ongoing

Dissemination

DataHub





Visit https://datahub.itu.int

ITU resources

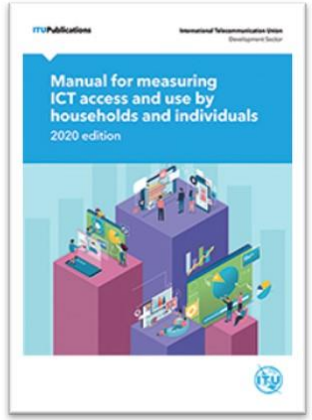
ITUAcademy
Empowering minds

Measuring digital development: ICT access and use by households and individuals

https://shorturl.at/9Ejj2

Manual for Measuring ICT Access and Use by Households and Individuals

www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/publications/manual.aspx



ITUEGH

ITU Expert Group on ICT Household Indicators

https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/expertgroups.aspx#EGH

Thank you!

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Find ICT data online!

ITU DataHub - datahub.itu.int/

Facts and Figures - https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/facts/default.aspx

ITU Academy course - https://shorturl.at/9Ejj2