



OVERALL SUMMARY OF THE IC4D

Information and Communications for Development 2006: Global Trends and Policies is a new World Bank flagship publication addressing the critical role being played by information and communication technologies (ICT) in economic development. It provides a global overview of ICT trends and policies in developing countries, covering issues such as financing infrastructure, improving access, using ICT in doing business and formulating national e-strategies. The ICT At-A-Glance tables for close to 150 economies enable assessment and comparison both over time and across economies to assess ICT capacity, performance, progress and opportunities.

MAIN FINDINGS

- **ICT plays a vital role in advancing economic growth and reducing poverty.** A survey of firms carried out in 56 developing countries finds that firms that use ICT grow faster, invest more, and are more productive and profitable than those that do not.
- Over the past 25 years, **developing countries have considerably increased ICT access**, especially for telephone services. Between 1980 and 2005, the number of telephone subscribers in developing countries rose by over 30 times. In 1980, developing countries accounted for only 20 percent of the world's telephone lines. In 2005, 60 percent of the world's phones were in developing countries. Such expansion has been driven by the technological revolution of mobile telephony as well as private competition.
- **Opening up to private competition has led to huge inflows of investment from overseas.** Between 1990 and 2003, 122 of 154 developing countries received close to US\$200 billion foreign investment in telecommunications.
- Completing the **transition to well-regulated and competitive service provision** remains the foundation to providing ICT access. And there is some way to go in this transition – for example, nearly half of the World's countries retain monopolies on fixed local international service provision.
- While the developing world has seen huge progress in rollout of basic ICT infrastructure, the **picture is more mixed for advanced use of ICT**. Worldwide, Internet use more than quadrupled between 2000 and 2005, but differences in the number of secure Internet servers, a proxy for the availability of e-commerce, remain stark. While developed nations have more than 300 such servers per 1 million people, developing nations have fewer than 2.
- There is a **continued need for government support to “access” and application initiatives**. The report outlines innovative public-private partnerships to extend access to rural and remote areas, for example.
- A **review of 40 national e-strategies from developing countries** finds that more than 85 percent aim to expand ICT use in governments and schools, expand telecommunications infrastructure, and provide an adequate legal and regulatory framework.
- Although many countries have made significant progress, **more work is needed to make e-strategies effective tools for development**. The report calls for e-strategies to develop clear cross-sectoral objectives and specific interventions with clarity in terms of budget and responsibility.
- Countries should **increase efforts to collect and share ICT data**. The international community can facilitate more effective coordination of such efforts.

AT-A-GLANCE TABLES

- **What is it:** The AAG tables compile about 30 ICT indicators for 144 economies, offering data on access, quality, affordability, efficiency and sustainability, and ICT applications. For each indicator, 2000 and 2004 data are provided, along with the regional average and income group average.
- **Where did the data come from:** Data are drawn from Global Insight, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Netcraft, various United Nations agencies (UNDESA, UNDP, UNPAN), World Economic Forum (WEF), World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), and the World Bank.
- **How is it useful:** The tables allow countries to make comparison across economies and assess their own progress over time.