

9 September 2020

WSIS Forum 2020

“WSIS UN Regional Commissions Meeting Round Table”

UN Regional Commissions

Bridging the digital divide for inclusive broadband access

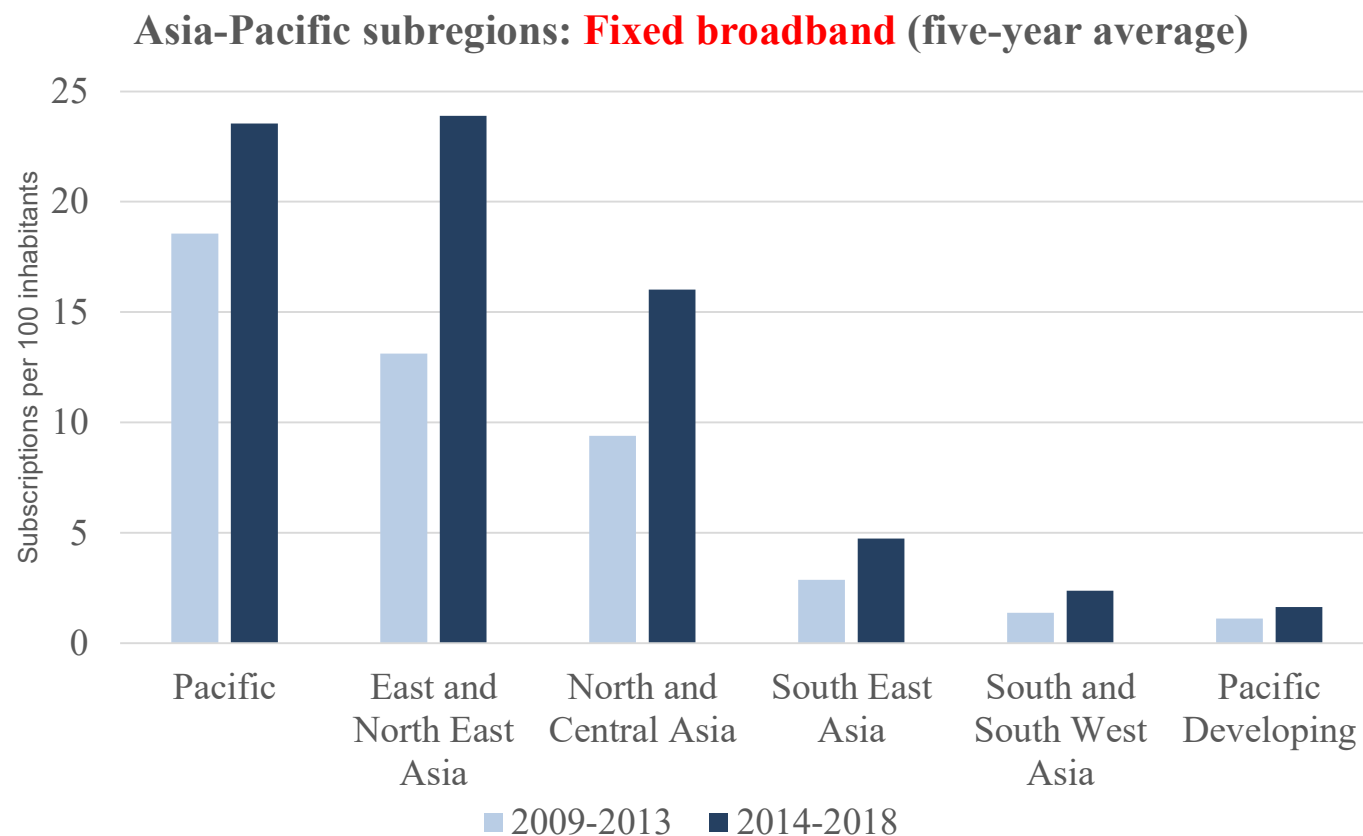
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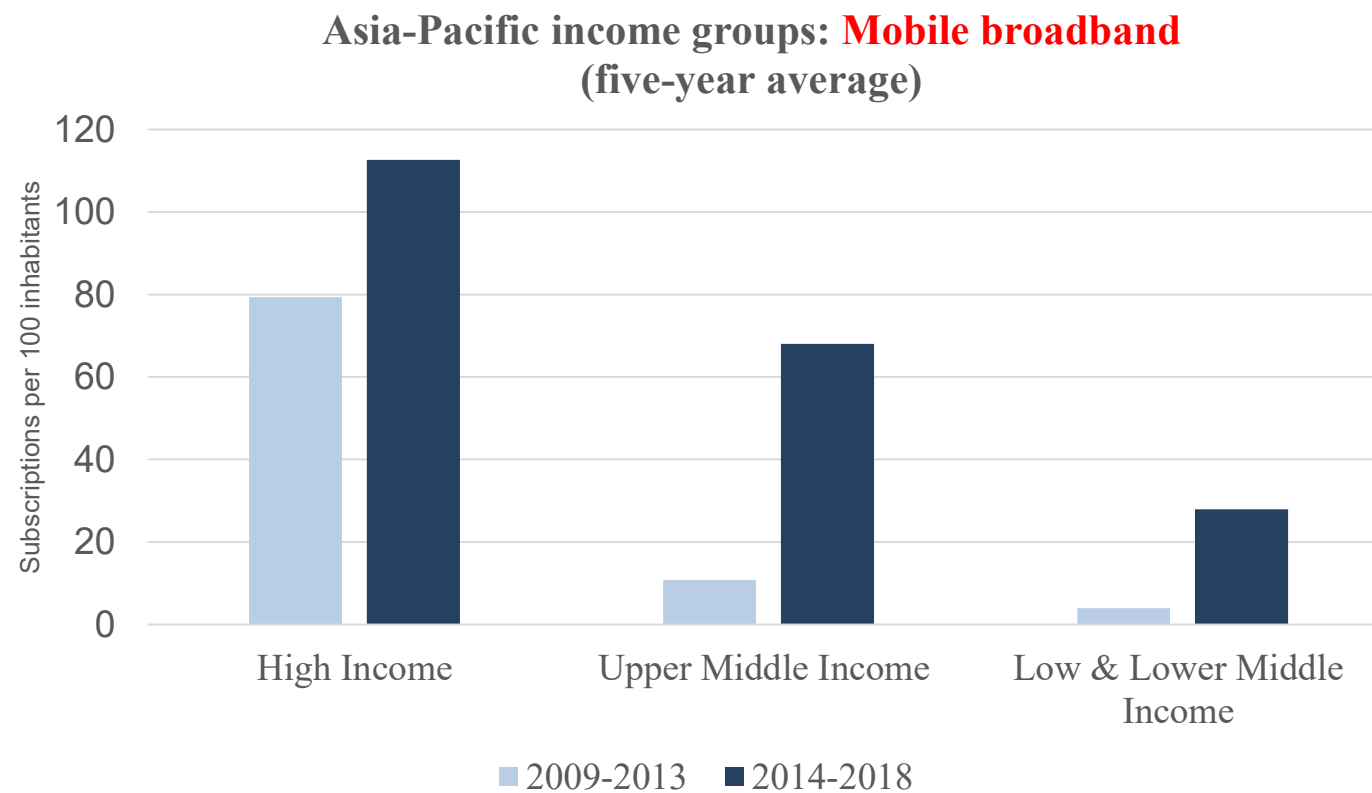


Digital divide persists...



Source: ESCAP calculations based on the ITU, World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database, 23rd ed (2019). Available at www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/publications/wtid.aspx (accessed on 21 January 2020).

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New forms of digital divide emerging during COVID 19

- Digital divide widens
 - millions reliant on mobile connectivity (2G/3G) become under-connected
 - millions who relied on Internet from workplace or from school lose access
- Development divides amplify
 - Education divide as millions of unconnected or underconnected children lag behind their connected peers
 - Rural-urban divide as millions of migrants return to rural unconnected areas
- Digital divide may be evolving into the new face of inequality



Regional responses

(1) Progress in subregional implementation of AP-IS

In line with ESCAP Resolution 75/7, the secretariat was requested to support the subregional implementation of the 4 pillars of AP-IS

a) Improve Internet traffic management for speed and reduced latency

Pacific island countries: Establishment of a shared carrier-neutral subregional Internet Exchange Point (IXP)

- Two working group sessions and capacity development workshops held (Dec 2019, July-August 2020) in partnership with ISOC (Internet Society)
- Three Pacific countries (Fiji, New Zealand & Samoa) identified as candidates (technically feasible) for establishing a Pacific Internet exchange point (IXP).
- Pacific island countries informed of operational modality options (*possible governance structure, who will run IXP, how it will be funded, design structure of IXP, business model, licensing requirements etc*), and internal consultations on possible options underway.

Regional responses

(1) Progress in subregional implementation of AP-IS

a) Improve Internet traffic management for speed and reduced latency

Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar & Viet Nam: establishment of a shared carrier-neutral subregional Internet Exchange Point (IXP)

- One webinar in partnership with NIA-RoK (July 2020) to present initial findings of study: information collection and verification and exchange of ideas
- Highlighted importance of continued close cooperation among stakeholders for establishment of Internet exchange points (IXPs) and role of enabling national strategies for IXP development
- Highlighted the need to identify sufficient funding resources for establishing IXPs
- Next steps: finalize study and hold further consultations among CLMV and neighboring countries over inter-country connectivity to reduce cost and enhance quality of Internet



Regional responses

(1) Progress in subregional implementation of AP-IS

b) Improve cost-effectiveness of fiber-optic cable infrastructure development through infrastructure sharing and co-deployment

Mongolia, North and Central Asia & South and South-West Asia:

- 4 capacity-development workshops (August, September, November 2019 and July 2020).
- Develop a single information portal on sectoral infrastructure projects for improved cross-sectoral, inter-ministerial information sharing and knowledge.
- Conduct further studies on the cost-benefits of development of the future 3 smart corridors linking Almaty-Cholpon-ata, Semey-Rubtsovsk, & Urzhar-Chuguchak (Tacheng).
- Explore the possibility of developing an e-resilience index, which can help governments strengthen e-network preparedness for future emergencies, so that networks can withstand shocks and serve all.
- Realize through newly created [SPECA WG on Innovation and Technology for SD](#) which met virtually on 30 July 2020 and supported this work.



Regional responses

(2) Capacity Building on ICT for Inclusive and Sustainable Development

Theme 1: COVID-19 (Knowledge-sharing on ICT solutions to COVID-19)

- Policy papers and e-learning course on ICT and COVID-19

Theme 2: LDC, LLDC and SIDS (including Pacific and CIS countries)

- Trainings - Digital Government Leadership for Senior Officials

Theme 3: Gender (APCICT's flagship: Women ICT Frontier Initiative)

- National partners from 10 countries utilizing the WIFI modules in ICT training activities for policymakers and women entrepreneurs

Programme Improvement

- Independent evaluation of APCICT with recommendations to improve results-orientation and performance of APCICT in the context of the 2030 Agenda and future APCICT Strategic Plan.
- Updating modules: Realizing Data-Driven Governance, ICT and Disaster Risk Management, Information Security and Privacy, and Social Media for Development
- New areas: Co-deployment for AP-IS, ICT and COVID-19, ICT for Project management and Digital government & Transformation



Outcomes of CICTSTI3 (Digital and Space Applications)

Recommendations to Secretariat

(1) COVID-19 and importance of digital connectivity and e-resilience

- Support expanding regional collaboration including multi-stakeholder alliances to scale up broadband internet capacities for effective use of innovation

(2) Set up a drafting group as part of the AP-IS Steering Committee to develop an action plan for the next phase of implementation of the Master Plan for the AP-IS

(3) Accelerate research on the issue of co-deployment of fiber-optic cables along passive infrastructure networks

(4) Continue to study and promote the establishment of carrier-neutral internet exchange points, with a focus on LDCs, LLDCs & SIDs.

(5) Continue enhancing regional cooperation as a means of scaling-up the contribution of space applications to SDG implementation

Thank you

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