

# Digital connectivity is a necessity - not a luxury.

While mobile network coverage is growing, worldwide adoption is still only at 57%.

Over

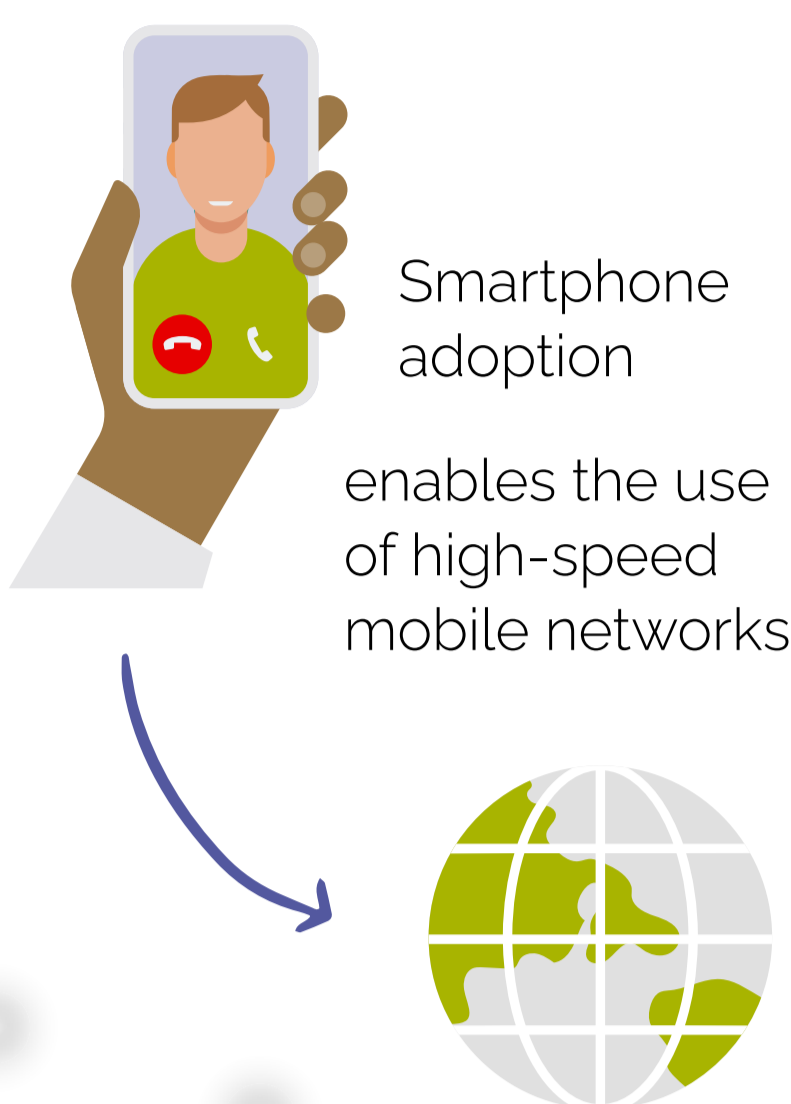
## 2.7 billion people

remain unconnected to the Internet.

That means **more than 1/3** of the world's population<sup>1</sup> does not have access to critical information and opportunities, from education to government services.

1 | ITU, 2022

## Smartphone adoption is key to closing this digital divide.



Studies have shown that in Africa, for example,

**10%** more people accessing high-speed networks would lead to an **average 2.5% growth in GDP.**<sup>2</sup>

2 | ITU, 2020

## Smartphone ownership is lowest in emerging markets.

**Only 45% of adults** in emerging markets own a smartphone vs. **76% in advanced economies.**<sup>3</sup>

Findings show **women** in these markets are even less likely to own a smartphone.<sup>4</sup>

3 | Pew Research Center, 2020

4 | GSMA, 2022

## Affordability is one of the key challenges to smartphone adoption.

Smartphones can cost over **70%** of the **average monthly income** in vulnerable countries, making them unaffordable.<sup>5</sup>



Additionally, **a lack of consumer awareness, local content and basic digital skills** erodes consumer confidence and limits the adoption of smartphones.

5 | A4AI, 2021

The Broadband Commission Working Group on Smartphone Access recommends **three key interventions to make smartphones accessible to all.**

Make devices affordable by:

**1. Increasing device financing options** (e.g. flexible payment options)

**2. Introducing fair taxation and import duties**

and **3. Improving distribution to remote areas**

+ Investigating further the use of device subsidies and pre-owned smartphones.

## This is outlined in a 5 point action plan:

1. Create partnerships across the digital value chain
2. Improve regulation and quality standards for pre-owned smartphones
3. Develop strategies to recycle mid- and low-tier price band devices

4. Explore the use of Universal Service Funds and government subsidies

5. Model the benefits of reducing tax and import duties

**Making smartphones accessible to all will help to empower individuals and communities across the world.**

For more insights, read the full report at: [bit.ly/WGSmartphoneAccess](https://bit.ly/WGSmartphoneAccess)