



**Third United Nations
Conference on
Landlocked Developing
Countries**

Connectivity Track:

Digital Potential Beyond Boundaries

**6 August 2025
Awaza, Turkmenistan**

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), which will be held in Turkmenistan from August 5-8, 2025, presents a critical opportunity for the international community to commit to a transformative, decade-long agenda for LLDCs.

Digital connectivity is a transformative opportunity for LLDCs, which face inherent geographical and structural constraints such as lack of direct access to the sea, transportation and communication obstacles, long distances from major markets, cumbersome transit procedures, and inadequate infrastructure.

Advancing meaningful digital connectivity in LLDCs would facilitate the flow of information and services, enabling businesses to reach global markets. The digitalization of economic activities could help LLDCs participate in international trade by overcoming traditional barriers -- including the cost of physical storefronts and distribution networks -- enabling them to move more commerce online. ICTs can also improve the efficiency of transportation and logistics through advanced tracking and management systems, helping LLDCs manage trade processes and reduce costs. Additionally, implementing ICTs in public services can streamline governance and improve service delivery in areas such as education and health.

Digital connectivity is vital for inclusive and sustainable economic development for the 21st century, particularly for LLDCs. Development-driven export strategies increasingly require a focus on services, including technology-improved agriculture and manufacturing processes. To work well, these services require affordable and reliable digital connectivity. In addition, modern, well-functioning physical infrastructure, such as roads and ports, also relies on digital connectivity. Digital trade facilitation and customs modernization allows for the use of digital technologies to simplify, streamline and harmonize trade procedures and information flows and improve border security.

Despite the potential, LLDCs lag in ICT competitiveness, relying heavily on ICT goods imports. Over the last decade, ICT goods exports as a percentage of total trade for LLDCs remained below 1 percent, reaching just 0.6 percent in 2021. This is in stark contrast to the global increase in ICT goods exports by 4 percent post-COVID-19¹.

Significant progress is needed to achieve universal digital connectivity in LLDCs. As of 2024, only 39 percent of individuals in LLDCs used the internet, compared to the world average of 68 percent. There are disparities across regions and countries: internet use was 63 percent in the 12 LLDCs in Asia, while in the 16 LLDCs in Africa, the average was only 26 percent. A digital gender gap also persists, with 43 percent of the male population online compared to 36 percent of the female population.

Affordability remains a major barrier to universal connectivity in LLDCs. Prices are typically higher than global medians, varying across countries and types of service (fixed or mobile broadband). For example, in 2023, the price of an entry-level mobile-broadband basket as a percentage of monthly gross national income (GNI) per capita ranged from 0.6 percent in Azerbaijan to 32.7 percent in Chad. The median price in African LLDCs was 4.8 percent of GNI per capita, compared to 1.1 percent in Asian LLDCs, which is below the world median of 1.3 percent.

¹ See the following report: Measuring digital development - Facts and Figures: Focus on Landlocked Developing Countries, April 2024 - ITU

The imperative for robust connectivity and digital innovation has been emphasized in all three regional review meetings leading up to LLDC3. The connectivity track of the conference will focus on four key areas in LLDCs:

Access: Connecting people everywhere

Adoption: Empowering communities

Value Creation: Advancing Meaningful Connectivity

Accelerate: Incentivizing investments.

These efforts are aligned with the international community's Program of Action for LLDCs over the next decade, which outlines five priority areas. The first of these is **structural transformation and science, technology and innovation**. This priority area includes key targets and commitments related to digital connectivity, for example:

- Increasing action to bridge the artificial intelligence and other digital divides between and within countries.
- Establishing regional digital platforms for peer-to-peer level learning, trainings, and capacity building.
- Enhancing digital literacy, and proficiency including in advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, and automation technologies, to harness opportunities and optimize the use of new and emerging technology.
- Expanding the participation of LLDCs in the digital economy, including by enhancing their digital infrastructure connectivity, building their capacities and access to technological innovations through stronger partnerships and improving digital literacy and skills.
- Supporting LLDCs in developing and strengthening national digital strategies, meaningful digital connectivity, skills development, national regulatory frameworks, and conducive regional and global environment.

Achieving the goals of the new Program of Action for LLDCs will require universal, affordable, and meaningful access to connectivity, supported by the necessary investments and partnerships.

Why should you attend?

The connectivity track of LLDC3 will convene high-level representatives from the private sector, government, civil society and academia seeking to expand LLDCs' participation in the digital economy by enhancing digital infrastructure connectivity, strengthening digital skills development, and accessing technological innovations.

Participants will have the opportunity to hear from and interact with world leaders on concrete programmes and solutions for the further development of LLDCs through connectivity and technology. The track will also offer participants an opportunity to interact with distinguished members of the **Partner2Connect Digital Coalition (P2C)** community. It will offer a deeper understanding of key commitments that support the vision of universal and meaningful connectivity, as well as sustainable digital transformation in LLDCs.

The Connectivity Track will also give participants an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding on the Digital Infrastructure Investment Initiative, led by ITU in collaboration with the International and Regional Development Finance Institutions, which aims to identify innovative financial instruments and mechanisms to close the digital infrastructure financing gap, and how this can support the **LLDC Infrastructure Investment Finance Facility**. Other initiatives such as the **EU's Global Gateway Strategy** will also be featured.

Ultimately, the track will explore strategies for closing the connectivity gap, and implementing innovative and sustainable solutions, to ensure inclusive and equitable digital meaningful access for all, in particular in LLDCs.

Objectives

EXPLORE progress on selected pledges from the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition (P2C) targeting LLDCs.

ANNOUNCE new pledges from the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition (P2C) that support the vision of universal and meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation in LLDCs.

PARTICIPATE in matchmaking opportunities for universal and meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation in LLDCs.

PROMOTE Digital Transformation, confronting the critical challenge of bridging the digital divide hindering LLDCs path to universal connectivity.

ADVOCATE the need for more meaningful connectivity in LLDCs, highlighting the importance for stakeholders to mobilize and collaborate to prioritize innovative infrastructure financing, competitive environments, and cost-effective network development of all kinds.

How can I attend the LLDC3 Connectivity Track?

Interested participants, including, the private sector, international organisations, academic and CSOs, are invited to visit the participate section of the LLDC3 website for the latest information on registration at the following link:

<https://www.un.org/en/landlocked/participate>

Participants are encouraged to ensure that their organization or business is duly accredited and that each participating individual is registered. Participants are required to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses.

Where and when?

The LLDC3 Connectivity Track will take place on **Wednesday, 6 August 2025**, during the third United Nations Conference on the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3).

Preliminary Programme

08:30 - 08:45 **Welcome Remarks**

08:45 - 09:45 **Bridging the Divide in LLDCs through the Partner2Connect (P2C) Initiative and ITU's Digital Infrastructure Investment Initiative**

This session will spotlight the critical role of digital connectivity in addressing the structural and geographic challenges faced by LLDCs, where only 39

percent of the population is online. Showcasing the Partner2Connect (P2C) platform, with over 1,000 pledges valued at more than USD 73 billion, over 25 percent targeting LLDCs, the session will also highlight synergies with the ITU-led Digital Infrastructure Investment Initiative (DIII), which aims to unlock the USD 1.6 trillion financing gap for digital infrastructure through blended finance and investment-ready project pipelines.

- **Opening Remarks** (5 min)
Welcome by session hosts and overview of objectives
- **Setting the Scene: Digital Transformation in LLDCs** (10 min)
Framing the session with key data, challenges, and opportunities for meaningful connectivity in LLDCs, Including DIII's findings: only 39% of LLDC populations are connected, and digital infrastructure gaps.
- **Panel Discussion: Unlocking LLDC Potential Through Pledges and Partnerships** (30 min)
A rapid-fire roundtable with P2C pledgers and LLDC representatives sharing experiences, progress, and lessons learned, and featuring interventions reflecting on how DIII's Country Assessment Framework is being used to de-risk investments and catalyze blended finance solutions.
- **Matchmaking Highlights and New Opportunities** (10 min)
Presentation of key partnership opportunities, tools, and upcoming engagement avenues, such as the DIII's Catalyzer platform as a tool to match DFIs, governments, and the private sector with digital investment opportunities
- **Closing Reflections and Call to Action** (5 min)
Summary of key takeaways and an invitation to engage and pledge

08:45 - 09:45 Financing Model of the EU Global Gateway Initiative

10:30 - 11:15 Coffee Break and Networking

11:15 - 12:00 Ensuring Meaningful Connectivity in LLDCs

12:00 - 12:45 Digital Cooperation Organisation session

This session will provide an overview of the DEN framework, how it is evolving in 2025, and what its significance is for enabling digital transformation and integration in developing countries, including LLDCs. It will emphasize data-based policy making for the digital economy and translating DEN to policy and practice. The session will also highlight challenges facing evidence-based policymaking, such as data gaps and resilience

- DCO
- LLDC
- UN Technology Bank
- Private sector: 500 Global
- MDB

12:45

Closing

Co-organising Partners

The LLDC3 Connectivity Track is co-organized by OHRLLS, ITU and Turkmenistan.

Focal Points

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More information on LLDC3 is available at: [Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries | United Nations](#)