

A map of Asia and surrounding regions, including parts of Europe, Africa, and Oceania. The map is color-coded by country and includes labels for major bodies of water like the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, Philippine Sea, and Indian Ocean. A yellow banner is overlaid on the top half of the map.

Asia and the Next Billion: Challenges in Digital Inclusion

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Congratulations!

On behalf of APRALO as well as India SIG, I would like to congratulate the organizers and participants at the AfSIG 2017.

We hope that the AfSIG 2017 will enable more of the Afghanistan Internet Governance Community to participate better in the global IG processes, and project the voice of Afghan Internet Users in them.

The Asia-Pacific Region

- Asia is a region that's home to almost 60 % of humanity
- The definition of Asia varies by context, but includes at least areas to the South and East of the Caspian Sea
- The ICANN definition of Asia includes the region from Middle East and Armenia to Pacific Islands
- An extremely diverse region
- Has about 1.7b Internet users, close to 55% of the total 3.6b Internet users

The Digital Divide

- The digital divide takes several forms in the region:
 - Social and Demographic
 - Geographic
 - Economic
 - Technological
 - Policy

Challenges in Connecting the Next Billion

- Difficult terrain (mountains to Small-Island States)
- Diversity of languages/scripts
- Large rural populations
- Highly variable Internet infrastructure (penetration varies from 91% in Japan, to 1 % in Timor Leste)
- Social and Educational backwardness
- Gender-based access issues
- Extreme diversity
- Existence of linguistic and cultural minorities (eg., indigenous peoples, differently-abled)
- Lack of policy coherence

Positive Factors

- Increasing technology use across barriers, esp. mobile phone (also TV)
- Falling costs for Internet access
- Better education
- More openness towards technology, particularly from the youth
- Internet Governance gradually coming to the fore, through a number of institutions (including ISOC, ICANN)

Conclusion

- Asia-Pacific is very diverse region with a multitude of challenges in Internet connectivity
- The region has both very high and very low Internet penetration in different countries
- Government policy is an important factor that can start the change
- Civil society and the Internet Governance community have a role through adopting models from other countries and increasing advocacy efforts

Thank You!

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