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# There will be more mobile phones than people by 2014: ITU

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Reuters

As global mobile-cellular penetration approaches 100 percent, by 2014, there will be more mobile phones than people on earth, says the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

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"Every day we are moving closer to having almost as many mobile-cellular subscriptions as people on earth. This is exciting news. The mobile revolution is m-powering people in developing countries by delivering ICT applications in education, health, government, banking, environment and business. Let us all celebrate this mobile miracle that I have no doubt will hasten our pace towards sustainable development," said Brahima Sanou, director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau.

Almost 40 percent of the world's population - 2.7 billion people - are online. The developing world is home to about 826 million female Internet users and 980 million male Internet users. The developed world is home to about 475 million female Internet users and 483 million male Internet users.

The gender gap is more pronounced in the developing world, where 16% fewer women than men use the Internet, compared with only 2% fewer women than men in the developed world.

In 2012, pre-paid was the preferred choice of mobile subscriptions- accounting for over 70 percent of mobile subscriptions globally, and over 87 percent in the developing world.

There are over 100 countries with mobile-cellular penetration exceeding 100 percent, which means there are more mobile cellular subscriptions than inhabitants.

In seven economies worldwide, mobile cellular penetration is over 200 percent. China is the first country to achieve one billion mobile cellular subscriptions. China is now the world's largest smartphone market.

India will soon become the second country to have one billion subscribers. In sub-Saharan Africa, mobile-cellular penetration stood at over 50 percent, compared to around 1 percent for fixed-telephone penetration.

South Africa is the 15th largest telecommunication market in the world in terms of revenues from telecommunication services, with one of the highest ratios of revenues to GDP in the world.

More than 160 countries have launched 3G services. And almost half the world's population is covered by a 3G mobile network. Mobile broadband continues to surge - showing average annual growth of 41 percent over the past four years.

Over two-thirds of people under 25 in developing countries - almost 2 billion people - are not yet online. So there is huge potential if we can connect schools, says the ITU.

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