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Number of Mobile Subscribers Worldwide Hits 5 Billion

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Two-Thirds of World's Population Now Connected, According to GSMA Intelligence

London: The world's mobile industry has signed up its 5 billionth unique mobile subscriber, according to real-time data from GSMA Intelligence, the research arm of the GSMA. The 5 billion milestone means that more than two-thirds of the global population is now connected to a mobile service. It has taken four years to add the latest 1 billion subscribers.

“Reaching the 5 billion subscriber milestone is a tremendous achievement for an industry that is only a few decades old, and reflects the many billions of dollars that mobile operators have invested in networks, services and spectrum over many years,” commented Mats Granryd, Director General of the GSMA. “Today mobile is a truly global platform, delivering connectivity and, perhaps more importantly, social and economic opportunities to citizens in all corners of the world. This massive reach allows the mobile industry to be a key player in delivering global initiatives such as the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals¹.”

India To Drive Future Subscriber Growth

More than half (55 per cent) of mobile subscribers are based in the Asia Pacific region, which is home to the world’s two largest mobile markets: China and India. China accounts for more than a billion of the world’s subscribers, while India accounts for 730 million.

The most highly penetrated region in the world is Europe, where 86 per cent of citizens are subscribed to a mobile service. Sub-Saharan Africa is the least penetrated region at 44 per cent.

It is forecast that the number of unique mobile subscribers worldwide will increase to 5.7 billion by the end of the decade². By that point, almost three-quarters of the world’s population will subscribe to a mobile service. India is expected to account for the largest share of growth over this period, responsible for around 30 per cent of new unique subscribers by 2020.

“Subscriber growth opportunities over the coming years will be focused on connecting mainly rural, low-income populations; operators are developing a range of sustainable solutions to deliver affordable connectivity to underserved communities,” added Granryd. “Meanwhile, in mature markets where subscriber growth is slowing, operators are evolving their business models to capture increasing value within the expanding mobile ecosystem, and providing the platform for a new digital world as we enter the 5G era.”

Region	Unique mobile subscribers (millions)	% of global subscriber base	Subscriber penetration (% of population)
Asia Pacific	2,765	55%	68%
• - China	1,081	21%	78%

• - India	730	14%	54%
Europe	465	9%	86%
Latin America	459	9%	71%
Sub-Saharan Africa	436	9%	44%
Middle East & North Africa	391	8%	63%
North America	292	6%	80%
CIS	227	5%	79%
TOTAL:	5,035	100%	67%

Unique Mobile Subscribers by Global Region, Q2 2017

Source: GSMA Intelligence

Tracking The World's Mobile Subscribers

GSMA Intelligence tracks the number of unique mobile subscribers worldwide in real time at www.gsmainelligence.com. This number is calculated using GSMA Intelligence's extensive database of mobile statistics and forecasts, which comprises tens of millions of individual data points, updated daily.

A 'unique mobile subscriber' is defined as an individual person that can account for multiple 'mobile connections' (i.e SIM cards). According to GSMA Intelligence, the world's five billion unique mobile subscribers today account for approximately 7.7 billion mobile connections (excluding M2M).

View the 5 billion subscriber infographic [here](#).

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About The GSMA

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting nearly 800 operators with almost 300 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. The GSMA also produces industry-leading events such as Mobile World Congress, Mobile World

Congress Shanghai, Mobile World Congress Americas and the Mobile 360 Series of conferences.

For more information, please visit the GSMA corporate website at www.gsma.com. Follow the GSMA on Twitter: [@GSMA](https://twitter.com/GSMA).

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¹ In September 2015, the UN introduced a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 17-point plan aims to end poverty, combat climate change and fight injustice and inequality. The GSMA is supporting the SDGs as part of its #betterfuture campaign.

<http://www.gsma.com/betterfuture/>

² <http://www.gsma.com/newsroom/press-release/number-of-global-mobile-subscribers-to-surpass-five-billion-this-year/>

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