



GSMA launches big data for social good initiative

Backed by 16 Operators Accounting for 2 Billion Connections in Over 100 Countries; Pilots Set to Launch in June 2017 in Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Myanmar and Thailand.

27 February 2017, Barcelona: Today at Mobile World Congress, the GSMA launched the “Big Data for Social Good” initiative, which will leverage mobile operators’ big data capabilities to address humanitarian crises, including epidemics and natural disasters. The programme is being launched with 16 of the world’s leading mobile operators – Bharti Airtel, Deutsche Telekom, Hutchison, KDDI, KT Corporation, Millicom, MTS, NTT DOCOMO, Orange, SK Telecom, Telefónica, Telenor, Telia, Turkcell, Vodafone and Zain – who collectively account for over 2 billion connections across more than 100 countries. The United Nations Foundation is a supporting partner, providing coordination and integration with the broader ecosystem, including organisations such as Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) and the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL). Trials of Big Data for Social Good, focusing on epidemics, will start from June 2017 in Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Myanmar and Thailand.

“A year ago, the mobile industry became the first sector as a whole to commit to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, as outlined in our Mobile Industry Impact Report published in September, we are already affecting all 17 Goals to varying degrees,” said Mats Granryd, Director General, GSMA. **“We are now focused on amplifying and accelerating our industry’s impact in achieving the SDGs,** and the initiative that we are announcing today will contribute greatly in addressing some of the biggest challenges facing humanity: epidemics and natural disasters.”

Reducing the Toll of Humanitarian Crises

The impact of humanitarian crises such as epidemics and disasters is staggering. Each year, 15 million people die and millions more become seriously ill as a result of infectious diseases¹, which are spread through human contact as well as other sources, such as mosquitoes. It’s estimated that 1.8 billion people were affected

by disaster in the last decade² and economic losses due to disaster amounted to \$1.5 trillion from 2003 to 2013³.

Through Big Data for Social Good, mobile operators will provide key insights based on anonymised meta-data generated by their networks to support the response in these critical situations. For instance, by monitoring the flow of people to and from impacted areas, public health organisations can more effectively respond to prevent epidemics, slow the spread of disease and better target relief efforts. With access to mobile network insights, humanitarian agencies can more accurately aid evacuation, response and recovery efforts.

Delivering a Scalable Response

A major goal of the Big Data for Social Good initiative is to develop scalable, common processes and mechanisms and build an ecosystem to support timely planning and response to crises. To support this, the GSMA will be establishing a code of conduct designed to ensure that all activity undertaken adheres to strict privacy regulations. Further, the GSMA is working to standardise the process, leveraging common algorithms and processes to generate insights, as well as defining de-facto standard output formats for sharing insights and mechanisms for delivering insights.

Initial trials of Big Data for Social Good for epidemics are set to begin from June, with Bharti Airtel in India, Telefónica in Brazil, and Telenor in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand. The objective of the multi-operator pilot is to develop common capabilities to monitor, alert, predict and manage the spread of diseases that, if unaddressed, could create epidemics. In the trials, operators will provide insights based on anonymised meta-data using common data feeds and algorithms to provide insights into human movement patterns. The trials will enrich this information with third-party data sources



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such as hospital intakes, death counts and weather data, among others, to provide meaningful insights that local and international government and humanitarian agencies can use to make decisions on when, where and how to deploy resources. The GSMA expects to publish the results of these trials at Mobile World Congress in February 2018.

Increasing the Impact on SDGs

The Big Data for Social Good initiative will positively impact many of the SDGs, including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

Alongside the Big Data for Social Good initiative, the GSMA and UN Global Pulse today published a report on the "State of Mobile Data for Social Impact." The report demonstrates the potential value of mobile-derived insights in achieving important public policy objectives by outlining the key developments and use cases in this area where data/call data records were used. The report also offers examples of research and pilot efforts that have already been done and highlights the key challenges and limitations on both the demand and supply sides. Further, the study makes recommendations to advance sustainable public-private partnerships and the use of mobile data for social impact.

"Big Data for Social Good will build on examples from across the globe, of operators large and small, in developed and developing economies, investing in big data to improve society across a number of areas," continued Granryd. "It also complements the experience and insights gained through GSMA programmes such as Disaster Response, mHealth, Connected Living and others, with an emphasis on delivering accelerated, demonstrable impact that can be extended further to address other areas of global concern."

For further information on the Big Data for Social Good programme, visit www.gsma.com/betterfuture/bd4sg.

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Notes to editors

1. Dye, Christopher. "After 2015: Infectious Diseases in a New Era of Health and Development." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 369.1645 (2014): 20130426. PMC. Web. 23 Feb. 2017. <http://rstb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/369/1645/20130426>

2. GSMA Humanitarian Connectivity Charter http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Charter_Activites_document.pdf

3. "Impact of Disasters on Agriculture and Food Security", United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5128e.pdf>

