GSMA Assistive Tech

Driving the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities

May 2021

Mobile is a gateway to digital inclusion

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world's reliance on **(mobile) internet to access critical information**, services and opportunities has never been greater.

Mobile phones have the potential to be bespoke and cost-effective tools for persons with disabilities, clustering together multiple ATs in a single device.

Yet, access remains unequal & the nexus of mobile & disability has only started to be understood.
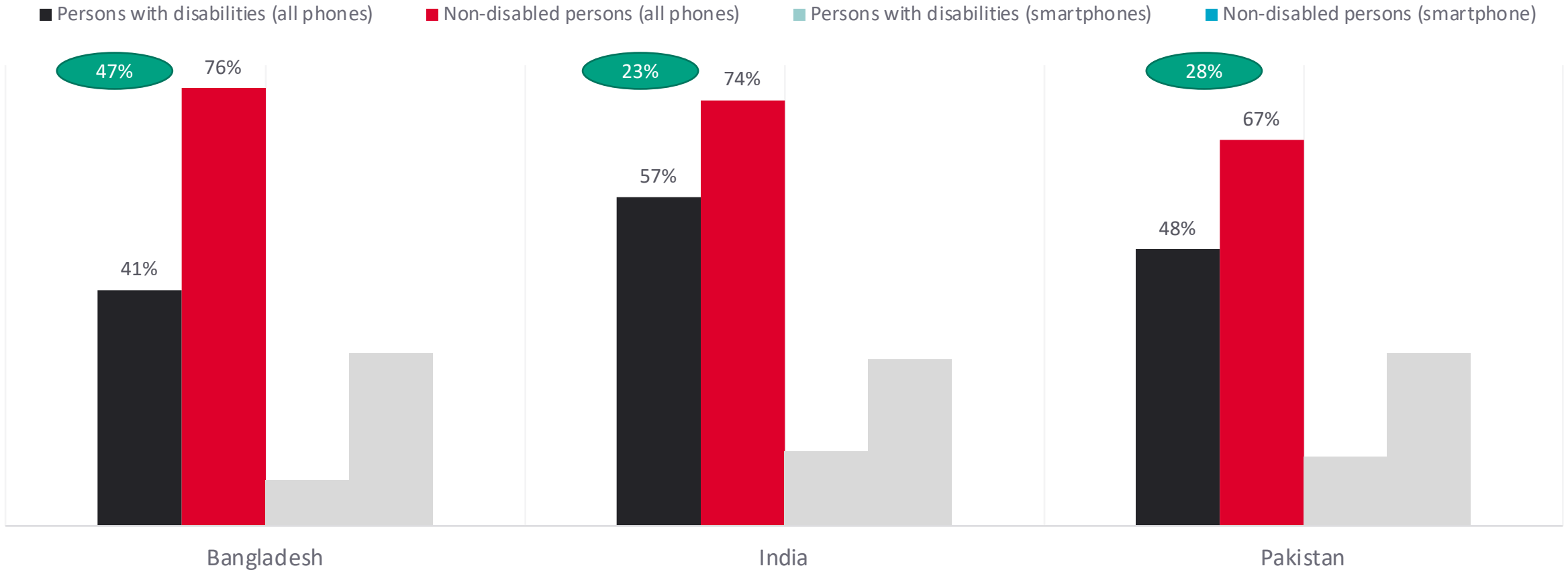
Our digital inclusion framework

1. Mobile ownership
2. Awareness of mobile internet
3. Mobile internet adoption
4. Regular mobile internet use
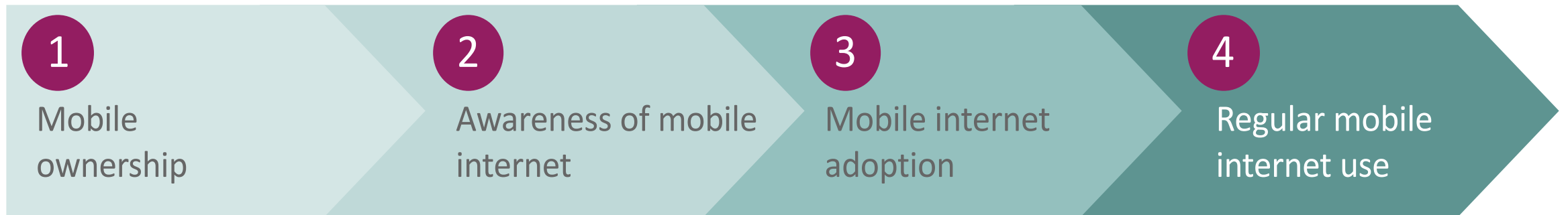
There is a disability gap in mobile ownership

Mobile ownership by persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons
Percentage of the total population

- ■ Persons with disabilities (all phones)
- ■ Non-disabled persons (all phones)
- ■ Persons with disabilities (smartphones)
- ■ Non-disabled persons (smartphone)

Bangladesh: 47% | 41% | 76%

India: 23% | 57% | 74%

Pakistan: 28% | 48% | 67%

Source: GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey, 2019
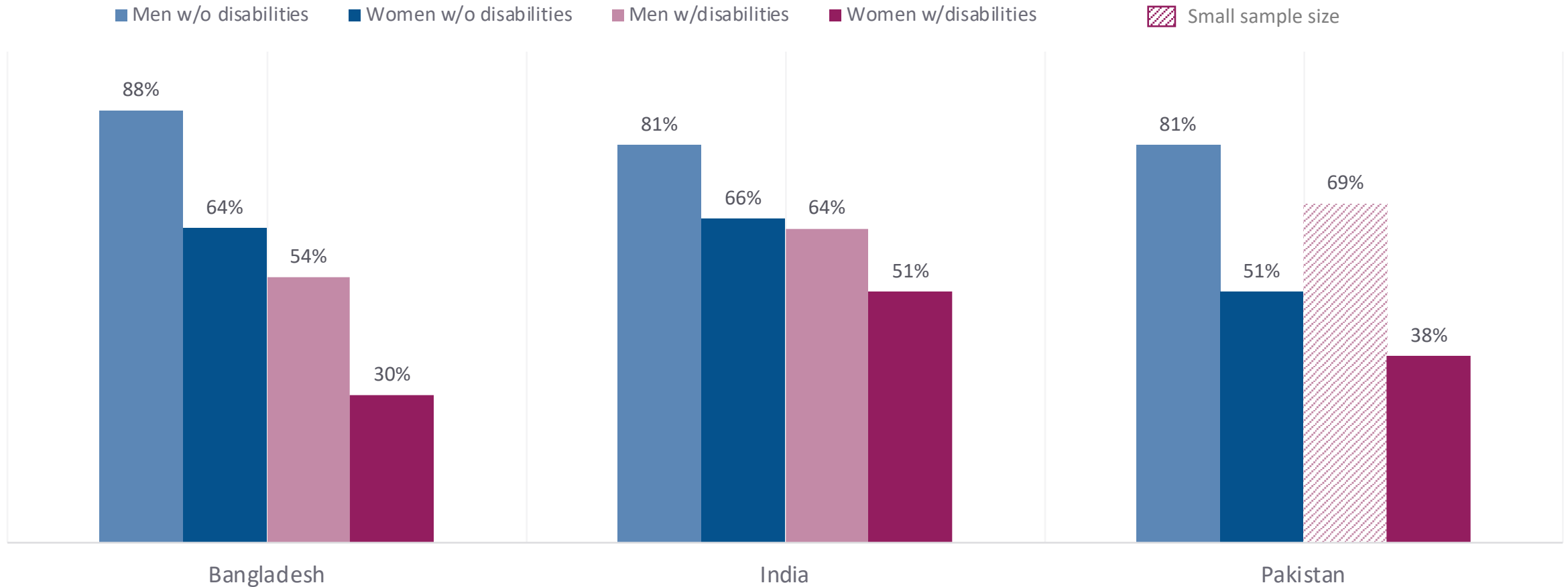
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..but the disability gap is much bigger for smartphone ownership

Mobile ownership by persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons
Percentage of the total population

- ■ Persons with disabilities (all phones)
- ■ Non-disabled persons (all phones)
- ■ Persons with disabilities (smartphones)
- ■ Non-disabled persons (smartphone)

Bangladesh
- 47%
- 76%
- 41%
- 73%
- 30%
- 8%

India
- 23%
- 74%
- 57%
- 55%
- 29%
- 13%

Pakistan
- 28%
- 67%
- 48%
- 71%
- 30%
- 12%

Source: GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey, 2019
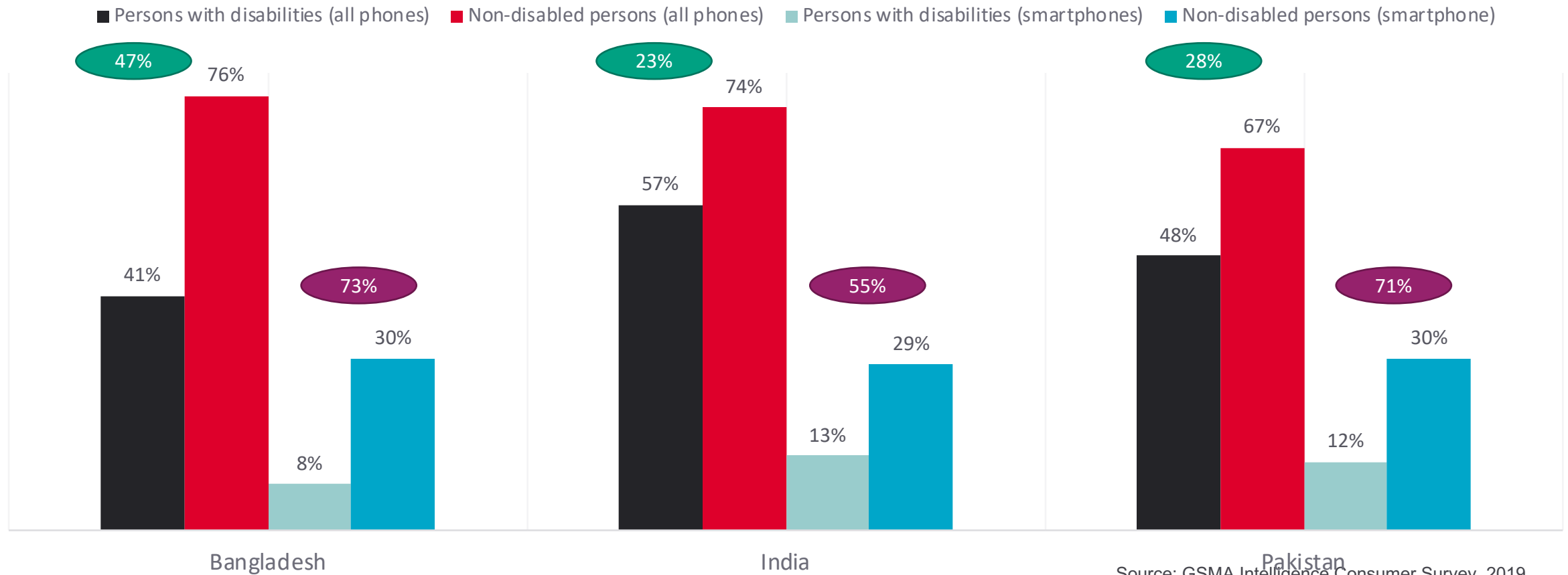
Women with disabilities are at greater risk of digital exclusion

Mobile ownership by persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons
Percentage of the total population

Legend: ■ Men w/o disabilities ■ Women w/o disabilities ■ Men w/disabilities ■ Women w/disabilities ▨ Small sample size

Bangladesh
- 88%
- 64%
- 54%
- 30%

India
- 81%
- 66%
- 64%
- 51%

Pakistan
- 81%
- 51%
- 69%
- 38%

Source: GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey, 2019
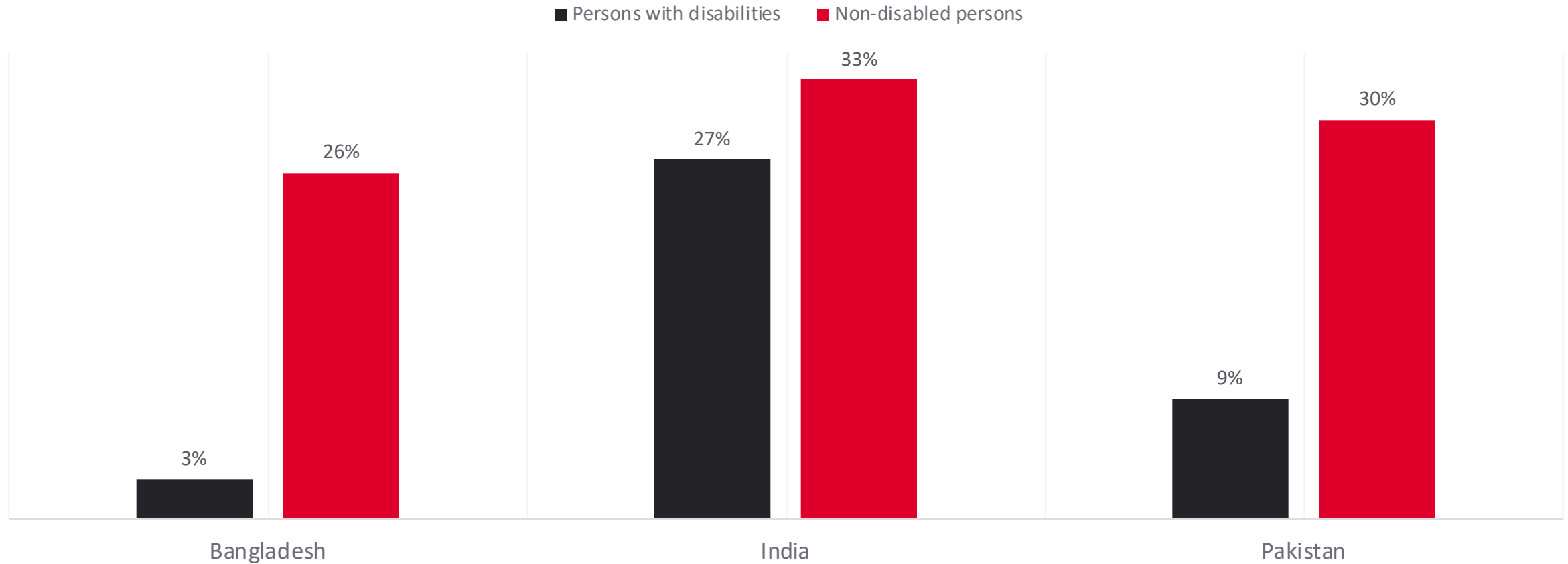
Mobile internet awareness is low amongst persons with disabilities

Mobile internet awareness by persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons
Percentage of the total population

■ Persons with disabilities   ■ Non-disabled persons

Bangladesh: 54% (Persons with disabilities), 74% (Non-disabled persons)
India: 59% (Persons with disabilities), 61% (Non-disabled persons)
Pakistan: 59% (Persons with disabilities), 76% (Non-disabled persons)
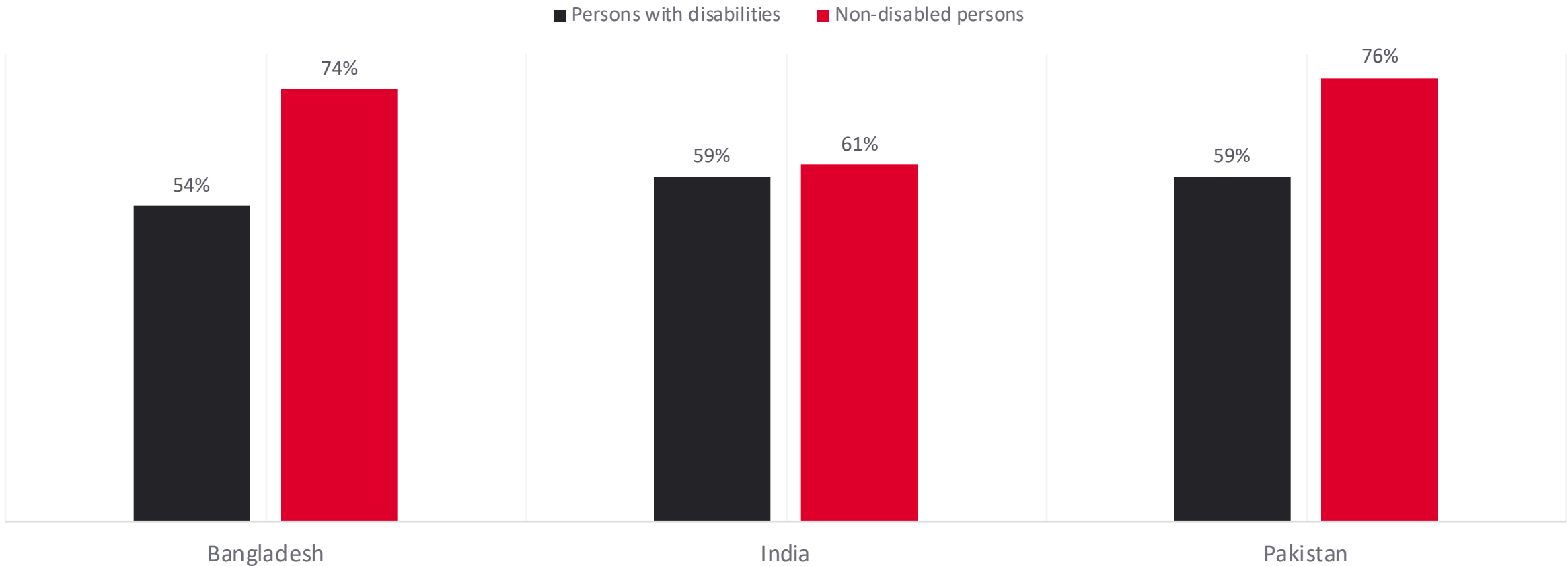
Source: GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey, 2019

…which may impact the mobile internet adoption

Mobile internet use by persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons
Percentage of the total population

■ Persons with disabilities   ■ Non-disabled persons

	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan
Persons with disabilities	3%	27%	9%
Non-disabled persons	26%	33%	30%

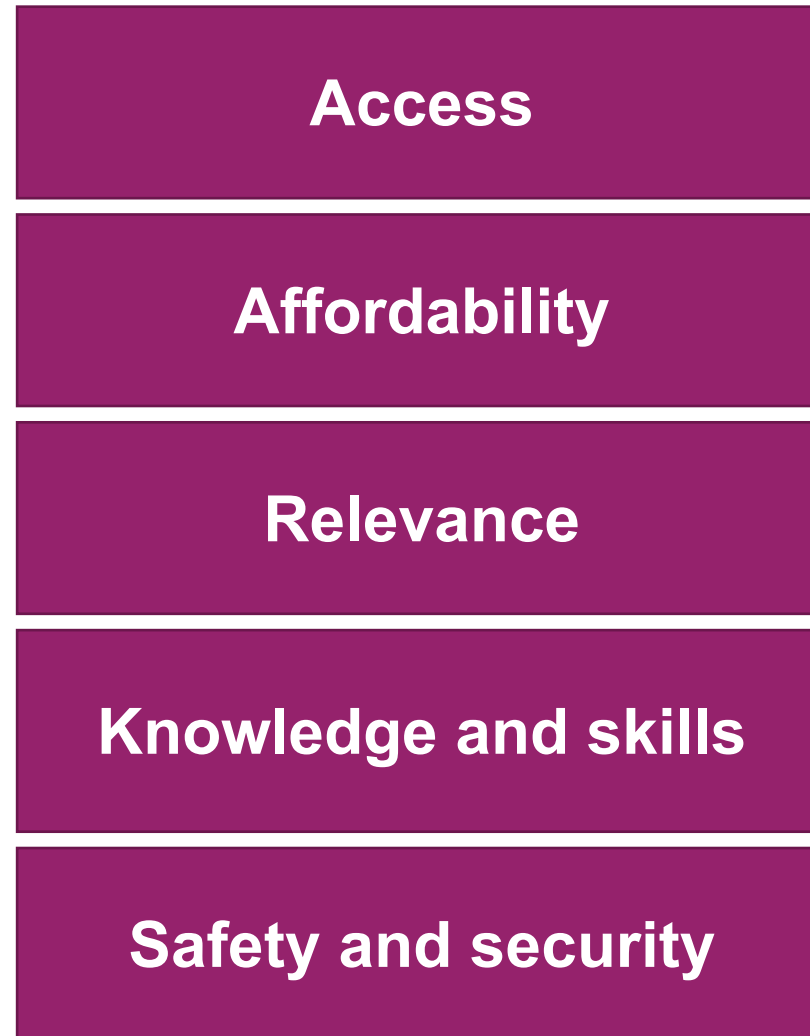Source: GSMA Intelligence Consumer Survey, 2019

In some countries, evidence shows awareness of accessibility features is low…

Awareness of mobile accessibility features by persons with disabilities and non-disabled persons
Percentage of those who have access to a mobile phone

- ■ Persons with disabilities (all)
- ■ Non-disabled persons (all phones)
- ■ Smartphone owners w/disabilities
- ■ Smartphone owners with visual impairment

Bangladesh: 4%, 12%, 22%, 64%

Kenya: 1%, 10%, 14%, 41%
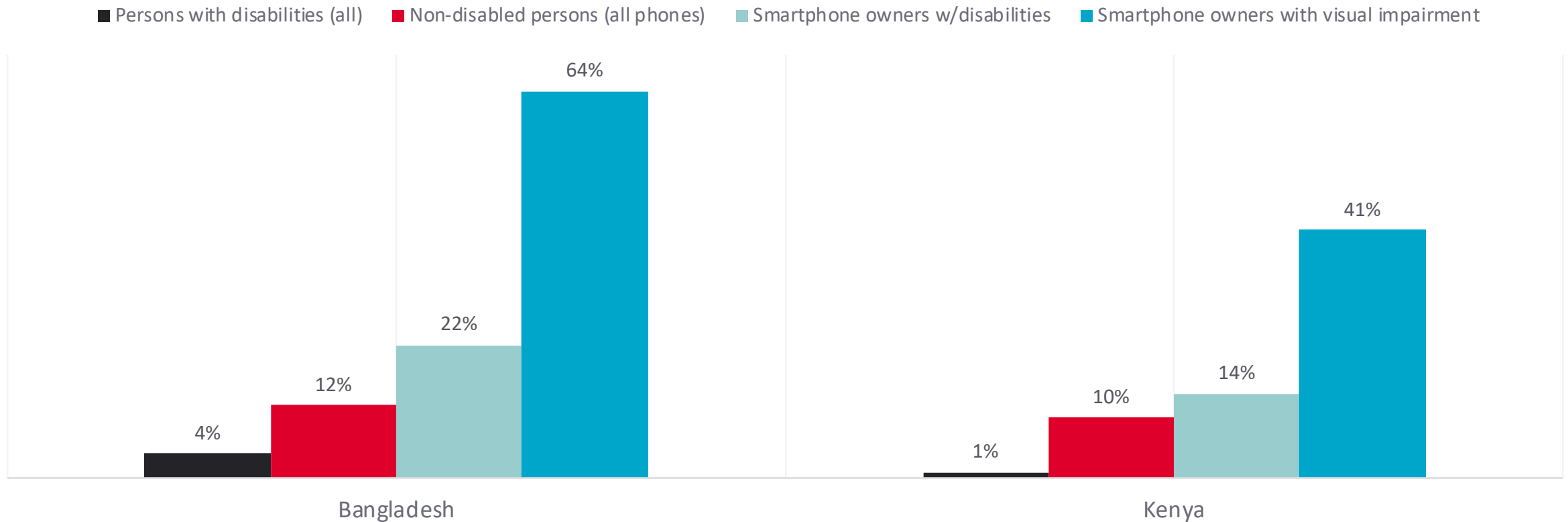
Source: GSMA, 2019

Several barriers lead to the mobile disability gap

Access

Affordability

Relevance

Knowledge and skills

Safety and security

GSMA Mobile Internet Skills Training Toolkit (MISTT)

What is it?

A set of **free resources** (PDFs and video) to teach people the **basic skills** they need **to access and use mobile devices** and mobile-enabled services such as the **internet**.

How is it implemented?

The MISTT short lessons can be **delivered directly to customers via various digital or in-person channels**. Content can be easily translated[1] and adapted to local needs.

What does the MISTT curriculum cover?

- Basic **smartphone usage skills**
- Overview on **accessibility features**
- **Online safety**, privacy and managing mobile data costs
- **Mobile Money**
- Introduction to popular **internet applications**: WhatsApp, YouTube, Google, Wikipedia, Facebook etc.

Follow-up

In addition to the **MISTT resources**, The GSMA provides implementation partners with **guidance on best practices** for rolling out MISTT as well as monitoring impact and **facilitates connections** between relevant stakeholders for the deployment of MISTT.

1. Content is available in 8 languages

The Principles for the Digital Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Principle 1
Embrace disability inclusion at every level of the organisation

Principle 2
Understand how to reach, and better serve people with disabilities

Principle 3
Deliver inclusive products and services that meet the diverse requirements of people with disabilities

The Principles aim to drive the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities through the **commitment of the mobile industry**. They provide operators with a **holistic framework for action** that we believe will **reduce the gap in access and usage** of mobile-enabled products and services.

Here are some GSMA resources we hope you'll find useful

Publications

The Mobile Disability Gap Report 2020

The Digital Exclusion of Women with Disabilities
A Study of Seven Low- and Middle-Income Countries

Understanding the mobile disability gap
Insights on mobile phone access and usage by persons with disabilities in Kenya and Bangladesh

How mobile operators are driving inclusion of persons with disabilities

Opportunities for digital assistive technology innovations in Africa and Asia

Bridging the mobile disability gap in refugee settings

Videos

ASSISTIVE TECH
ANGIE'S STORY
NAIROBI KENYA

ASSISTIVE TECH
JOSEPH'S STORY
NAIROBI KENYA

ASSISTIVE TECH
SUMONA'S STORY
DHAKA, BANGLADESH

ASSISTIVE TECH
JOHN'S STORY
NAIROBI KENYA

Watch now
Vodafone Ghana discusses their Super Care product for people with hearing and speech impairments

Watch now
HopeTech+ discusses improving mobility for the visually impaired through Sixth Sense

Thank you

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The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

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