Global smartphone sales exceed 1.2b units in 2014

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FY 2014 actual unit sales data shows Latin America to be the fastest growing region for smartphones, up 59 percent year-on-year Globally, unit sales of smartphones with larger screens (5"+) grew 180 percent in 2014. GfK forecasts this to be the largest segment in 2015

Emerging markets will drive growth of smartphone sales this year, with those priced below $100 gaining the biggest market share globally.

Nuremberg, February 17, 2015 - Global smartphone sales set a new milestone in Q4 2014, reaching $115bn for the quarter, an increase of 20 percent year-on-year, according to GfK data. The number of units sold globally increased to almost 346m, up 19 percent on Q4 2013.

In Q4 2014, all regions saw year-on-year growth in smartphones, both in terms of units and value. The one exception was Developed APAC, where subsidy changes in Korea negatively affected these already very mature markets. The Latin America smartphone market enjoyed the highest growth with 36m units sold in Q4 2014, a 43 percent year-on-year increase. This region also saw the value of units sold increase by 37 percent year-on-year to around $10bn.

China will remain the biggest market in terms of both unit and value sales for the foreseeable future. However, growth slowed dramatically in the second half of 2014. During the fourth quarter smartphone unit sales were flat year-on-year, although the value of units sold increased by 21 percent year-on-year to $28bn, the highest ever quarterly figure.

Kevin Walsh, Director of Trends and Forecasting at GfK says: "The increase in the value of units sold in China, despite the recent plateauing of unit sales, is due to consumers' rapid adoption of higher priced smartphones with larger screen sizes. This is a trend seen in most markets and GfK global data shows that the 5 to 5.6 inch segment grew by more than 130 percent year-on-year in the last quarter of 2014 and by nearly 150 percent in the full year. In 2015, we forecast this segment to become the dominant screen size band, surpassing 4 to 4.5 inch for the first time."

Smartphones	Units Sold (in mil.)			Sales Value (in billion USD)		
	Q4 2013	Q4 2014	% Change	Q4 2013	Q4 2014	% Change
Latin America	25.1	36.0	43%	7.2	9.9	37%
Central & Eastern Europe	16.7	21.5	29%	4.5	5.1	12%
North America	43.6	57.0	31%	18.4	25.1	36%
Emerging APAC	30.4	41.8	37%	6.4	7.6	18%
Middle East & Africa	27.9	37.8	35%	8.7	10.8	25%
Western Europe	35.1	40.0	14%	15.6	17.2	10%

China Units	95.0	95.1	0%	23.5	28.3	21%
Developed APAC	18.1	17.3	-4%	10.9	10.9	0%
Total global units	292.0	346.5	19%	95.3	114.8	20%

Primary Source: GfK Smartphone sales based on point-of-sale (POS) tracking in 90+ markets

All other regions - except for North America and developed APAC - saw a decrease in the ASP in Q4 2014. Looking ahead, all regions will grow in unit terms in 2015, but growth rates will slow significantly from 2014.

Walsh continues: "The slowdown forecast for 2015 is due to developed markets reaching saturation point. As a result, global smartphone unit growth will be only 14 percent this year, down from 23 percent in 2014. We forecast emerging regions to drive growth in 2015 as smartphones further penetrate lower price points. GfK forecasts that smartphone price bands above $150 will see a decline in their market share. At the next level down, $100-150, sales will remain stable, but it is the cheaper smartphones priced below this point that will gain share."

The most resilient two regions in 2015 - both forecast to grow by 33 percent in unit terms - are Emerging APAC and Middle East & Africa. Both regions still have significant room for growth as consumers migrate from feature phones and existing smartphones to trade up to a bigger screen.

Smartphones		Units Sold (in mil.)			Sales Value (in billion USD)	
	FY 2013	FY 2014	% Change	FY 2013	FY 2014	% Change
Latin America	68.7	109.5	59%	20.6	31.4	52%
Central & Eastern Europe	50.9	69.8	37%	15.1	17.2	14%
North America	139.1	177.6	28%	58.2	71.8	23%
Emerging APAC	96.9	149.9	55%	22.3	28.4	27%
Middle East & Africa	99.8	135.2	35%	32.3	39.4	22%
Western Europe	115.4	128.0	11%	52.2	55.8	7%
China Units	359.0	392.8	9%	90.1	99.0	10%
Developed	68.3	65.1	-5%	39.6	38.1	-4%

APAC						
Total global units	998.1	1,227.9	23%	330.4	381.1	15%

Primary Source: GfK Smartphone sales based on point-of-sale (POS) tracking in 90+ markets
Ends

Note to editors

GfK tracks and forecasts end demand of consumer purchases rather than manufacturer shipments. Market sizes are built up by point-of-sale (POS) tracking in 90+ markets with updates on a weekly and monthly basis. For the US, GfK employs proprietary market modeling and consumer research rather than POS to produce its market forecasts. Values are based on unsubsidized retail pricing. Data is available quarterly. The next data set will be available in May 2015.

About GfK

GfK is the trusted source of relevant market and consumer information that enables its clients to make smarter decisions. More than 13,000 market research experts combine their passion with GfK's long-standing data science experience. This allows GfK to deliver vital global insights matched with local market intelligence from more than 100 countries. By using innovative technologies and data sciences, GfK turns big data into smart data, enabling its clients to improve their competitive edge and enrich consumers' experiences and choices.

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