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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on  
their efforts in 2016 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

**Submission by**

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

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# IMPLEMENTATION OF WSIS ACTION LINES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN 2016

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNECLAC continues its efforts on promoting the WSIS action lines, mainly as technical secretariat of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2018) and the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communication Technologies.

The eLAC2018 action plan was approved at the Fifth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean that was held in Mexico City from 5 to 7 August, and sets out 23 policy objectives in five areas of action: (i) access and infrastructure, (ii) digital economy, (iii) e-government, (iv) sustainable development and inclusion, and (v) governance.

On September 12 and 13, 2016, in San Jose, Costa Rica, took place the Second Meeting of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communication Technologies of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC). This subsidiary body was approved by the Resolution 672 (XXXIV) of the thirty-fourth session of UNECLAC. The Conference responds to the need to create a permanent space for political and technical dialogue at the highest level on science, innovation and ICTs to coordinate actions and exchange knowledge in order to improve quality and effectiveness of policies in this area in the region. Representatives from the following ECLAC member states participated in the meeting: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, the United States, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

At the Second Meeting of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communication Technologies of UNECLAC, a biennial program of activities for the conference was approved for the period 2017-2018. The program focuses on three objectives: i) Promote the training of human resources by fostering regional and international cooperation programs with the aim of promoting scientific and technological capabilities, ii) Foster the exchange of experiences and the generation of knowledge in the design of policies on science, technology and innovation, including information and communication technologies and iii) To facilitate the coordination and cooperation among the member countries of the Conference.

## OVERVIEW OF TRENDS AND EXPERIENCES

UNECLAC continued to contribute to achieving WSIS targets through five action lines: **(1)** acting as the Technical Secretariat of the eLAC<sup>1</sup> process and the Conference on Science, Innovation and

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<sup>1</sup> eLAC is a plan of action for Latin America and the Caribbean that states that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are tools for economic development and social inclusion. In 2005, during the preparatory meetings for the second phase of WSIS, the countries of the region approved the Action Plan for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as eLAC2007. The continuity of the process was forged with the approval of the second plan, eLAC2010, followed by eLAC2015 and, recently, eLAC2018.

Information and Communication Technologies (action line C1 and C11); **(2)** the Regional Broadband Observatory (action C2); and **(3)** capacity-building on selected issues for the development of the Information Society (action line C4).

## 1. TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT OF eLAC2018

Since the Fifth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City, from 5 to 7 August, UNECLAC's efforts aimed to set the follow-up mechanism for eLAC2018 and design a work plan for the conference. On February 2015, the steering committee of eLAC2018 approved a work plan based on four pillars: i) strengthening of the political dialogue in digital matters, ii) monitoring and evaluation of the digital agenda, iii) capacity building, exchange of experiences and dissemination and iv) research. The follow-up mechanism is comprised of three levels of coordination and cooperation, including the steering committee, the national focal points and 9 working groups: access and infrastructure; digital content; education; Internet governance; strengthening the IT Industry; digital single market; health; teleworking, social inclusion and sustainable development, and privacy and data protection.

Within the agreements of the fifth ministerial conference, countries recognize the importance of further examining the advantages and feasibility of making progress towards the establishment of a single digital market in the region. Within this framework, UNECLAC, as technical secretariat of eLAC2018, assisted with the establishment of the working group for assessing a digital single market strategy in the region. The objective of the work group is to "analyze the opportunities, challenges and strengths of promoting an integrated regional digital market for the development of the digital economy, consisting of the telecommunications infrastructure, the ICT industries (software, hardware and ICT services) and network of economic and social activities facilitated by the Internet, with the aim of promoting innovation, productivity, growth and social inclusion for equality".

This working group organized several activities which included two workshops and a seminar. The first workshop took place in Santiago de Chile on 2-3 of August, 2016, with the attendance of representatives of Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Peru. At this meeting, the work group approved a working plan which considers three strategies: policy and institutional frameworks, generation of knowledge and specific initiatives and public-private partnerships. The second workshop took place between the 7 and 8 of November, in Mexico City, with the participation of countries from Central America. Additionally, UNECLAC organized, in cooperation with the Latin American Bank for Development (CAF), a seminar entitled "Digital single market in Latin America" at the Telecommunications Congress in Latin America, which took place in Cancun, México, on the 22 of June, 2016. The seminar was attended by organizations like OECD, the Ibero-American Association of Research Centers and Telecommunications Companies and the European Commission.

As part of the support activities of eLAC2018, UNECLAC also organized a workshop on open data between 26 and 27 of June in Santiago, Chile, to discuss with government officials a framework for the evaluation of open data national programs. The evaluation of programs makes it possible to characterize the scenario in which open data is unfolded, its effects, impacts, gaps and opportunities for improvement. The aim was to develop a set of recommendations for the improvement of this type of policies and to distinguish their stage of development and projection. The workshop was attended by representatives from ten countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Uruguay.

UNECLAC participated in the Third International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics, held in Dublin, Ireland, from the 30 August to the 1 of September 2016. This global conference, organized by UNSD and CSO Ireland, was intended to help discuss the utilization of non-traditional data sources on

official statistics. Some examples of these types of initiatives include the use of mobile phone data, social media data or satellite imagery data. The promotion of data innovations requires real partnerships with the private sector, new skills, infrastructure, and clear links between these available big data sources and the SDG indicators. This activity was part of UNECLAC's recent involvement in the promotion of big data, and the coordination of project for measuring the digital economy with this type of methodologies.

UNECLAC also participated in the latest edition of the Global Internet Governance Forum held in Guadalajara, Mexico, between the 6 and 9 of December. UNECLAC attended the panel of WSIS Action Lines supporting the implementation of the SDGs - WSIS Forum: Information and Knowledge Societies for SDGs during the IGF. The panel was composed by international experts and representatives from ITU, UNESCO, ISOC and IEEE. The aim of the panel was to analyze, from multiple perspectives, the role of ICTs as key enablers of development, and critical drivers of innovative solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNECLAC attended also the workshop "Improving cooperation on ICT statistics between regional offices and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)", and the expert meetings on ICT indicators in households and telecommunication, held at the ITU headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, from 3 to 7 October. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the cooperation and coordination in the field of ICT statistics, serving as a space to share experiences and discuss methodologies in order to help advance in the harmonization of ICT measurement.

UNECLAC also continued to support the ICT measurement in the region through the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC). OSILAC maintains an updated and online [Statistical Information System on ICT](#) which gathers available databases of household surveys from the countries of the region, allowing the calculation and analysis of ICT access indicators by individuals, which allows cross analysis with variables like income, age, gender and region.

The activities listed above are primarily related with WSIS action line C1 and C11, focused on the role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development.

## **2. TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT OF CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES OF THE UNECLAC**

The resolution 672 (XXXIV) of the Thirty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) approved the establishment of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communication Technologies as a subsidiary body of the Commission. In accordance with this same resolution, the Conference shall elect an Executive Committee composed of a Chair and six members and approve a biennial program of regional and international cooperation activities in support of science, innovation and information and communication technologies policies.

The Second Meeting of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communication Technologies of UNECLAC was convened by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC and took place in San Jose, Costa Rica, on September 12 and 13, 2016. Representatives of the following ECLAC member states participated in the meeting: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, the United States, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

In the framework of the Second Meeting of the Conference, the session "Spaces of cooperation for the development of innovation and the digital ecosystem in Latin America and the Caribbean" was held along with a seminar on innovation in a digital world.

The Conference approved a biennial program of activities for the period 2017-2018. The program focuses on three objectives: i) Promote the training of human resources by fostering regional and international cooperation programs with the aim of promoting scientific and technological capabilities, ii) Foster the exchange of experiences and the generation of knowledge in the design of policies on science, technology and innovation, including information and communication technologies and iii) To facilitate the coordination and cooperation among the member countries of the Conference.

The document entitled Science, Technology and Innovation in Digital economy: The situation in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>2</sup> was presented by UNECLAC at the Second Meeting of the Conference on Science, Innovation and ICTs. This document stated that the position of each country in the international economy depends on its ability to absorb knowledge and bridge the gap with the technological frontier. Unfortunately, while in Latin America and the Caribbean countries there is some progress, the indicators of innovative effort and access to technology are not favorable. The capacity of Latin American and the Caribbean countries to absorb knowledge is weak. This is particularly important because in the new technological paradigms, technology adoption impacts the entire productive system and the potential to improve the performance of the industrial, agricultural and service sectors.

### 3. THE REGIONAL BROADBAND OBSERVATORY

The Regional Broadband Observatory (ORBA) continues to produce indicators on diffusion and access to broadband, tariffs and service quality. Specific data is an important input for defining and formulating broadband national plans and develop public policy. Data shows a significant progress in the broadband services offered in the region. Between 2010 and 2016, the affordability of fixed broadband improved significantly: the average proportion of income needed to pay for the service fell from 17.8% in 2010 to 2.07% in 2016, and the average cost of prepaid mobile broadband is between 1.5% and 11% of the monthly minimum wage. In terms of quality of service, while there have been significant advances, the countries of the region have a significant lag. The average fixed broadband speed is 4.7 Mbps for Latin America (14.1 Mbps for advanced economies), and the average mobile broadband speed is 3.5 Mbps for Latin America (11.4 Mbps for advanced countries).

In order to provide information to assess the degree of development of the countries of the region in terms of broadband adoption, UNECLAC prepared the document State of broadband in Latin America and the Caribbean 2016. The publication analyzes comparatively the degree of diffusion of the Internet in Latin America and the Caribbean and some policy challenges posed to bridge the digital gap with developed countries and between the countries of the region.

Additionally, to contribute to the technical and political dialogue on communications infrastructure and information, UNECLAC has made a series of presentations to different audiences, ranging from the general public to governments of Latin American countries. For example, UNECLAC presented at Regulatel's 19th Plenary Assembly, to representatives of regulatory bodies in Latin America, Spain, and Portugal. UNECLAC also presented at the Cámara de Industria Comercio (CAINCO) to authorities

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<sup>2</sup> [http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40530/S1600833\\_es.pdf](http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40530/S1600833_es.pdf)

of the Bolivian government and industry representatives. These presentations seek to inform stakeholders on the progress of the countries in the issue of infrastructure, inform countries on new trends (i.e. IoT, digitization of production) and agreements that are made in the different working groups with which ORBA partners (i.e. Digital Regional Market). Thereby, the observatory provides countries with relevant information and promotes discussion around these frontier issues. This will allow countries to seize the opportunity that digitization brings to mitigate the gaps of inequality and inequity that continue to challenge the region.

All these activities are in accordance with the C1 and C11 WSIS action lines.

#### 4. FOLLOW UP TO WSIS+10 AND SUPPORT TO THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

UNECLAC participated in the in the panel of WSIS Action Lines supporting the implementation of the SDGs - WSIS Forum: Information and Knowledge Societies for SDGs, during the latest edition of Global Internet Governance Forum which took place in Guadalajara, Mexico, between 6 and 9 of December. The aim of this panel was to analyze, from multiple perspectives, the role of ICTs as key enablers of development, and critical drivers of innovative solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The outcomes of this open session are planned to feed in to the WSIS Forum 2017 Open Consultation Process.

UNECLAC's participation at the panel highlighted the importance of the WSIS-SDG Matrix as a great tool to map, analyze and coordinate the implementation of ICTs as enablers of the SDGs. UNECLAC suggested that this exercise should be also replicated at the regional and national planning processes. ICT plans and digital strategies should also be aligned with development plans. This could boost an effective implementation of ICT projects and can accelerate the fulfillment of SDGs.

#### 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

UNECLAC carried out capacity building activities, among which stands out the following ones:

- The Digital Ecosystem Capacity Building (CE Digital) program was launched on April 2016. It is an initiative organized by CAF, UNECLAC and GSMA consisting on an e-learning platform for Latin American regulators and policymakers. The program includes eleven free online courses on the latest developments in the telecommunication industry and its public policy and regulatory frameworks, which allows regulators and policymakers across the region to get quality and updated training in the most important topics of the industry. Some of the topics addressed are Mobile for Socio-Economic Development, Principles of Mobile Privacy, Advanced Spectrum Management for Mobile Telecommunications, Radio Signals and Health, Internet of Things, Children and mobile technology, Competition Policy in the Digital Age, Principles of Internet Governance, Digital Money for Financial Inclusion, Weighing the Benefits of Universal Service Funds and Mobile Sector Taxation. The information can be accessed at [www.cedigital.org](http://www.cedigital.org).
- The Summer School on Development, New Technologies and Innovation took place in Barcelona, Spain, from 13 - 17 of June, 2016. This was the third version of the summer school. The aim was to present and analyze more in-depth the impact on development of new trends such as social innovation, Industrial Internet, net neutrality and the digital single market. It featured the participation of public policy authorities from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as of recognized experts, academics and representatives of international organizations (ASNET, ICANN, CAF, European Commission and OECD).

- UNECLAC organized the workshop "Evaluation of Open Data Programs". This activity was prepared with the collaboration of the International Research Center for Development in Canada (IDRC). The workshop was aimed to discuss the level of maturity and progress of national open data programs in the region. Representatives from ten countries assisted to the workshop, in which several challenges were address in order to improve the outcomes of open data initiatives.

## FUTURE ACTIONS

- UNECLAC will continue to act as the technical secretariat of the eLAC process, generating statistical information on access and use of ICTs, and data related to the adoption of broadband, the quality and affordability of the service, and supporting the coordination committee of the eLAC process. UNECLAC will also coordinate the working groups on the following topics: access and infrastructure; digital content; education; Internet governance; strengthening the IT industry; digital single market; health; teleworking, social inclusion and sustainable development, and privacy and data protection.
- UNECLAC will facilitate the organization of the preparatory meeting for the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean to be held on August 2017 in Santiago, Chile. Part of the preparation of the event considers the elaboration of the political documents that will be discussed at the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Information Society and the monitoring document for the follow up of the agreements made at the last ministerial conference.
- In a joint effort with ITU, UNECLAC will organize in August 2017 in Santiago, Chile, a workshop on the regional implementation of WSIS. The main purpose of this meeting is to provide a platform for stakeholders on implementing the WSIS Action Lines at the regional level, and share good practices, foster partnerships, identify regional challenges and opportunities, while strengthening the alignment between the implementation of WSIS and the SDGs. This meeting will provide structured opportunities to establish networks, learn and participate in multi-stakeholder discussions and consultations on WSIS implementation.
- UNECLAC will continue its efforts to implement the biennial program of activities for the period 2017-2018 of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communication Technologies.