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**Submission by**

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

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 18<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 2015

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The implementation of WSIS activities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region has continued at the national and regional levels. The LAC countries remain committed to the development of the Information Society, as they demonstrate during 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. The countries of the region have adopted the [Mexico Declaration](#) and renewed the commitments towards the digital development by approving the new agenda [eLAC2018](#), which 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. UNECLAC supports the eLAC process acting as its technical secretariat.

In 2015, eLAC was awarded with the WSIS Project Prizes in the category of regional and international cooperation. The WSIS Prize recognizes the effort made by eLAC towards achieving the WSIS goals.

UNECLAC continues its efforts on promoting infrastructure development by generating statistical information on access and use of ICTs, as well as indicators of broadband adoption, affordability and service quality. UNECLAC has focused the research on digital economy issues. Through its Division of Production, Productivity and Management, UNECLAC has participated in a study that analyzed the digital ecosystem, both globally and regionally, to provide an empirical basis to help define public policies that maximize the value creation in the region.

Studies produced by UNECLAC revealed the urgent need for Latin American and Caribbean countries to increase their efforts to develop the digital economy as a way to foster the structural change required for the economic growth and social inclusion. The adoption of digital technologies in the area of production will define competitiveness conditions, economic growth and social development in the next decade. The region faces this scenario with a weak capacity of production of equipments, software and apps in comparison with advanced economies that are moving faster into production models supported by digital platforms. Moreover, the local supply of products and services has not been consolidated in a dynamic and sustainable value creation process. This poses major challenges to be addressed from a public policy perspective.

## OVERVIEW OF TRENDS AND EXPERIENCES

UNECLAC contributed to achieving the WSIS targets through five action lines: **(1)** acting as the Technical Secretariat of the eLAC process<sup>1</sup> (action line C1 and C11); **(2)** the Regional Broadband

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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

Observatory (action lines C1 and C2); **(3)** following up WSIS+10 and supporting Post-2015 Development Agenda (action line C1 and C11); **(4)** promoting and monitoring the development of ICTs applications (action line C7); and **(5)** providing technical assistance and capacity-building on selected issues for the development of the Information Society (action line C4 and C11).

## 1. TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT OF eLAC2015

Since 2005, the Latin American and Caribbean countries (LAC) have embraced the adoption of ICTs as tools for development through the approval of the Action Plan for the Information Society in LAC (eLAC). As the Technical Secretariat for eLAC, UNECLAC efforts focused on fostering the implementation of the Regional Action Plan, by coordinating to the regional follow-up mechanism, monitoring compliance with the plan's goals, and the generation of statistics and indicators for measuring progress.

In 2015, UNECLAC through its Division of Production, Productivity and Management, was responsible for organizing, with the Government of Mexico, the Fifth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City, from 5 to 7 August. The Conference was attended by members of civil society, the private sector and the technical community, and government representatives from 18 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

The Conference aimed to take stock of the agreements in place and continue the policy dialogue with a view to the post-2015 world, incorporating the emerging challenges of the digital revolution and their impact on public policy. With this purpose, UNECLAC presented the document "[The new digital revolution: from the consumer Internet to the industrial Internet](#)", to contribute to the debate among national representatives.

The study describes the current digital revolution around the world, analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of digital access and consumption in the region and examines the main debates in terms of regulation, net neutrality and Internet governance, among other matters. It warns regarding the growing impact of digital technologies on the patterns of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability, especially in a region that faces problems due to the exogenous character of the technological progress and the fact that the digital technologies are linked to the economic structure almost entirely through private consumption. The production capacity of equipments, software and apps are very weak in comparison with advanced economies and are concentrated in two or three countries of the region. This reality is inscribed in a world that is moving from an Internet that serves as a platform for consumption to an Internet that will support the entire production process. The adoption of digital technologies in the area of production will define competitiveness conditions, economic growth and social development worldwide in the next decade.

Additionally, UNECLAC has produced the "[Monitoring of the eLAC2015 Action Plan](#)", a document that presents a review on the implementation of the goals of the eLAC2015 action plan. The report analyzes the level of adoption of information technology and communications (ICTs) in the region

and their application in government services, health, education and productive development, also examining the state of the enabling environment and the institutional framework required for the effective deployment of these technologies.

As a result of the Ministerial Conference, the countries of the region renewed the agreements of the eLAC process through the [Mexico Declaration](#), approving the new digital agenda [eLAC2018](#), which 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. The new agenda will also serve as an input for the global process of reviewing outcomes and preparing a new agreement in the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society, scheduled by the United Nations General Assembly for late 2015.

As part of a strategic alliance, the Fifth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Eighth Edition of the Latin American and Caribbean Internet Governance Forum (LACIGF) were jointly organized in Mexico City between the 3 and 7 of August. Note that the steering committee of the Digital Agenda of Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2018) appoints the government representatives involved in the program committee of the LACIGF. This forum has become a true regional space for multi-stakeholder policy debate where different stakeholders representing governments, the private sector, the technical community, the academia and the civil society share and discuss their views on Internet governance. The agenda of the event has been shaped through an open consultative process for a call of topics that are relevant within the region, that culminate in the following topics to be discussed: Human Rights, Surveillance and Privacy; Right to be Forgotten; Intellectual Property and Freedom of Expression, Net Neutrality; Digital Economy; Internet of Things; and Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion.

Since its earliest editions, one of LACIGF's goals has been to inform regional stakeholders on the topics and trends observed during global IGF debates and discussions. For the past 8 years, LACIGF has been consistently contributing to leverage the understanding of Internet Governance issues, to give the opportunity for regional stakeholders to come together and share information on the work that is being done on various topics at national and regional level.

The Mexico Declaration emphasize that the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Internet Governance Forum (LACIGF) held in Mexico City on 3 and 4 August 2015 represented an important step in strengthening links with the eLAC mechanism and in further building cooperation between the two.

UNECLAC participated in the latest edition of Global Internet Governance Forum held in Joao Pessoa-Brazil between the 9 and 13 November. UNECLAC also participated in the panel of digital economy and sustainable development in LATAM. The panel was composed by international experts and representatives from ISOC, GSM, ASIET. The aim of this workshop were to analyze, from multiple perspectives, what kind of barriers are stopping or slowing down the delivery of the positive outcomes of the digital economy in Latin America.

The Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC) has continued to support the ICT measurement in the region. The data on ICT access and use represent an important input for formulating, monitoring and evaluating public policies which guarantee a more inclusive access and usage of ICT in the region. OSILAC maintains updated an 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 and socioeconomic indicators over time, among the countries, within the countries of the region, and in relation to other countries and regions of the world.

UNECLAC with national statistical offices have elaborated the [Compendium of statistical practices on information technology and communications in Latin America and the Caribbean, version 2014](#) and third of its kind. It was prepared with the aim to provide references on measuring access and use of ICT in the region, besides presenting international developments on the international statistical ICT standardization.

The activities listed above are related with WSIS action line C1, focused on the role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development. Due that the eLAC process is a multi-stakeholder meeting space (public, private, academia and civil society); it constitutes a platform for high-level political dialogue and regional cooperation, in line with WSIS action line C11.

## 2. THE REGIONAL BROADBAND OBSERVATORY

The Regional Broadband Observatory 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. Data shows a significant progress in the broadband services offered in the region. Between 2010 and 2014, 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 just 3.8% in 2015, and the average cost of mobile broadband is between 1.5% and 5% of monthly per capita GDP. In terms of quality of service, while there have been significant advances, countries in the region have a significant lag. The average global broadband download speed is 7.3 Mbps for Latin America (32.2 Mbps for advanced economies), and the average upload speed is 2.9 Mbps for Latin America (13.4 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 2015"](#). 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 cooperated with a study produced jointly by CAF- Development Bank of Latin America, the Center for Studies of Telecommunications America (cet.la) and Telefonica Foundation, ["The digital ecosystem and digital economy in Latin America"](#). The study seeks to analyze and fully understand the digital ecosystem, both globally and regionally, to provide an empirical basis to help define public policies that are consistent with the objective of maximizing value creation in the region, contributing to its development economic. The study reveals that the digital economy in the region is still in its infancy. While 50% of Latin Americans are active consumers of global digital services and goods, the local supply of products and services has not been consolidated in a dynamic and sustainable value creation process. This is particularly important given the potential of creating a regional market to achieve economies of scale and create a globally competitive offer.

All these activities are in accordance with the C1 and C2 WSIS action lines.

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

Within the framework of the 2nd Preparatory Meeting - for the General Assembly's overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held from 20 to 22 of October 2015 at United Nations Headquarters, New York, UNECLAC organized the workshop: "The Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2018): The Regional Progress and the Vision For the Years Ahead". The event reviewed the progress of digital policies in the region and the current status of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2018). The session was attended by representatives from Mexico, Colombia, The Internet Society and UNECLAC.

The Mexico Declaration adopted at the fifth Ministerial Conference of the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean held in August 2015, resolve to foster the participation of government representatives in the discussions to be made by the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society. In addition, UNECLAC as the technical secretariat of the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, shares information periodically on the review process of WSIS.

In 2015, eLAC was awarded with the WSIS Project Prizes in the category of regional and international cooperation. UNECLAC, as the technical secretariat of eLAC participated in the awards ceremony held at the WSIS Forum. The WSIS Prize recognizes the effort made by eLAC towards achieving the WSIS goals.

### 4. ICTs APPLICATIONS

Some of the activities undertaken by UNECLAC during 2015 are listed below, by thematic areas:

#### e-Government

UNECLAC is addressing the issues of e-government from the perspective of open data through the Latin American Open Data Initiative (ILDA), a project sponsored by the International Center for Development Research (IDRC) and Avina. ILDA is a multi-stakeholder project to promote research, the use and ownership of open data in Latin America. The project is implemented by UNECLAC, Avina and OAS (organization of the American States) with the tasks of: supporting the development of Open Data Policy; sensitize and train public servants on Open Government and Open Data; develop research and promote the use and appropriation of open data by various stakeholders.

In this framework, UNECLAC was actively involved in organizing the Third Conference of Open Data for Latin America and the Caribbean (ConDatos) held in Santiago de Chile from 9 to 11 September. Some of the topics discussed at the conference were: open democracy, open public services, open cities and open innovation. There is an increasing release of public data in several countries in the region and developments in regulatory matters and infrastructure. This agenda has begun to help strengthen democratic institutions in Latin America. During the conference UNECLAC host a meeting of the Open Data Charter. At this meeting the group finalizes the discussion of the international Open Data Principles that were presented at the Global Summit of

the Open Government Partnership<sup>2</sup>, held in Mexico City from October 27-29, with the theme “Openness for All: Enabling Sustainable Development.” During the summit, UNECLAC joined the initiative as a strategic partner.

## 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

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

- Training Workshop "Application of the ICT Module in the Health Sector", 03–05 November 2015. The workshop was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil from 3 to 5 of November and was organized by the Working Group for Measuring ICTs of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA) of UNECLAC; the Regional Center Studies for the Development of the Information Society (CETIC.br); the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization (PAHO / WHO) and UNECLAC. The objective was to review an standardized a questionnaire for collecting data on ICT access and use in health establishments in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Summer school on development, new technologies and innovation, Barcelona 15 - 19 June 2015. The School aimed to analyze the new trends in information technology and communications from different perspectives, academic, regulatory and public policy. It featured the participation of responsible public policy development in Latin America (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, United States, Panama, Paraguay and Peru), as well as recognized experts, academics and representatives of international organizations (ASSET ICANN, CAF).
- Workshop on “Measuring the quality of Internet service”, held in Santiago on October 22, 2015, to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications of Chile in order to support the process of defining a law on measuring broadband Internet service quality.
- Course "Strategies for Open Government in the Americas", Santiago, from 16 to 20 November 2015, organized by UNECLAC through the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) together with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the Latin American Center for Development Administration (CLAD), through the Latin American School of Administration and Public Policies (ELAPP), and the Organization of American States (OAS). The course aimed to promote the strengthening of governance for the formulation and implementation of strategies of Open Government, increased transparency and collaboration in the exercise of government, and increased participation of citizens in public affairs.
- Digital Government in the Era of Open Government, organized by the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) of UNECLAC. The course has the main objective to deliver an overview of the concepts, tools and impacts that e-government and open government have had in the modernization of public administration and in their direct beneficiaries (citizens, businesses and public sector). It was held in three occasions:
  - 18-22 May 2015 at the Headquarters of UNECLAC in Mexico DF.

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<sup>2</sup> The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative with 66 member States that aims to transform the relationship between government and civil society, through citizen participation, transparency, accountability and the use of technology as an enabler of change.

- 27 - 31 July 2015 at the Headquarters of UNECLAC in Mexico DF.
- Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 24-28 August 2015, organized in collaboration with the Training Centre in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), as part of his Latin American Program of Specialized Technical Training (PIFTE).

## FUTURE ACTIONS

- UNECLAC will continue to act as the technical secretariat of the eLAC process, generating statistical information on ICT access and use, and data related to the adoption of broadband, service quality level and affordability, and supporting the coordination committee of the eLAC process. UNECLAC will be also coordinating the working groups on the following topics: 1) access and infrastructure, 2) digital content, 3) education, 4) Internet governance 5) strengthening the IT industry, 6) digital single market, 7) health, 8) teleworking, social inclusion and sustainable development 9) data protection and privacy on the internet, 10) cybersecurity, 11) technological waste and 12) regulatory framework of the information society.
- UNECLAC will facilitate the organization of a follow-up meeting of the eLAC process in the framework of the LACIGF 2016 to be held in Mexico, in order to promote regional cooperation for digital development and create synergies between both events.
- It is expected to deepen research on issues related to the digital ecosystem and digital economy, Internet industry and IoT. The use of big data for purposes of measuring the digital economy will also be explored.
- The post-2015 agenda has raised the need to transform economies towards more knowledge-intensive models, more inclusive and sustainable. In line with this objective, UNECLAC has proposed to undertake policies of structural change for equitable and sustainable development. In this framework, through innovations and new technologies, the digital economy can foster investment, diversification of the production structure and productivity growth. In September 2016, UNECLAC, as the technical secretariat of the Subsidiary Body on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies of Latin America and the Caribbean, will organize the Second Ministerial Conference, which will aim to strengthen the link between development policies, innovation policies and digital economy policies.
- UNECLAC will continue to support the Latin American Open Data Initiative (ILDA) by organizing a workshop for exchanging best practices on national open data portals. Also, a case study on open data national programs will be developed.
- When requested, technical assistance activities will continue to be carried out, specially in less developed countries.