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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international
organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2019 to
implement the outcomes 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 23rd 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 2019

I. Executive Summary

At the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Cartagena de India's, Colombia, from the 18th to 20th of April 2018, government representatives of 23 countries agreed on a digital agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean towards 2020 (eLAC2020), which sets 30 policy objectives in seven areas of action: digital infrastructure; digital transformation and digital economy; digital government; culture, inclusion and digital skills; governance for the information society; emerging technologies for sustainable development and regional digital market¹.

UNECLAC as co-facilitator of actions lines (C1) the role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development, (C6) enabling environment and (C11) international and regional cooperation, continued in 2019 its efforts to promote the implementation of the WSIS outcomes in the LAC region by fostering policy dialogue among members countries, leading research, providing technical assistance, training, and generating statistical information about access and use of digital technologies.

The Cartagena de India's Declaration, adopted at the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, reiterated the principles and objectives agreed upon at the World Summit on the Information Society, regarding the importance of building an inclusive information society and promoting the potential of information and communication technologies to achieve 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their targets.

According to the agreements made at the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, the presiding officers of the conference had the mandate to present a program of regional cooperation for the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean for the period 2018-2020. This program has the purpose to promote the fulfillment of the objectives identified in the eLAC2020 agenda.

Among, the key topics included in the Cartagena de India's Declaration is the importance of strengthen mechanisms of regional cooperation to provide the highest standards of information security and personal data protection, repudiating the unauthorized collection and improper and/or unauthorized use of persona data by any public or private entity, and fostering suitable mechanisms for ensuring the transparent treatment of personal data. Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries are also promoting a regional digital market strategy to benefit digital integration in the region and expand the digital economy, drawing on the cultural and linguistic similarities.

¹ See Cartagena de Indias Declaration, sixth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, Cartagena de Indias, 18-20 April 2018

II. Analytical Overview

a. Policy trends and contributions

At regional level UNECLAC promoted the implementation of the WSIS action lines through its role as the technical secretary of eLAC2020 and the fulfillment of program of regional cooperation of the digital agenda.

The presiding officers of the eLAC2020 digital agenda, chaired by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies (MINTIC) of Colombia, approved in July 2018, a program of regional cooperation activities for 2018-2020. This program has the purpose of promoting the fulfillment of the eLAC2020 digital agenda and identifies 53 cooperation activities linked to the 30 objectives of the agenda and its 7 core pillars.

The implementation of the program of activities is also related to the conformation of 8 working groups: i) Digital access and infrastructure, ii) Culture, inclusion and digital skills, iii) Internet governance for the information society, iv) Digital transformation and digital economy, v) Regional Digital Market, vi) Cyber legislation, vii) Digital government and emerging technologies and viii) Telework. The main mandate of the working groups is: (i) to foster the networks and mechanisms of collaboration, (ii) to support the exchange of experiences and good practices, (iii) to stimulate the generation of skills, (iv) to promote dialogue and scientific exchange and v) to contribute to enable institutional cooperation with other forums and organizations. For its articulation ECLAC enable a web forum, where working groups can exchange documents and hold debates, today the forum have 231 users (<https://comunidades.cepal.org/elac/es>).

Among the most relevant activities prepared within the framework of the program of regional cooperation of eLAC2020 is the workshop “Challenges in an Interconnected World, cross-border data flow, data protection and cybersecurity”, organized on November 22, 2018 in Santiago de Chile, by UNECLAC, the Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network, and the Cyber legislation working group of eLAC2020. The goal of the workshop was to enable a multi stakeholder debate about the tension between the cross-border nature of the Internet and national jurisdictions. The debate was center on the importance to develop policy standards and operational solutions to address pressing legal challenges on the intersection of the global digital economy, human rights and security. Representatives from 12 LAC countries attended the workshop.

Other activities coordinated within the framework of the program of regional cooperation of eLAC2020, is the digital ecosystem training program (EC-Digital) developed by UNECLAC, the Latin American Development Bank CAF and GSMA. The program provides free training opportunities on telecommunications policies since 2016 to national regulatory authorities and policy makers in Latin America. During 2019 four online courses were held, including “Natural Disaster Responses” “Radio Signals and Health” and “Spectrum for Mobile Services”. Between 2016 and 2019, 600 professionals were trained at EC-Digital from 17 countries.

Among the research activities, in 2018, UNECLAC published the report “Industrial digitalization: a path to collaborative governance. Case studies. The study presents a review of the most recognized industrial strategies at a global level focused on developing new productive and innovation capacities in firms to promote advanced manufacturing

methods. This research seeks to identify the appropriate technical and political conditions, which allow to take advantage of the opportunities posed by digital technologies and the industry 4.0, with the intention of strengthening the productive structure through the coordination and reorientation of public and private actions. The analysis covers the review of strategies and programs adopted in Germany, the United States, the Basque Community and China, with the intention of providing relevant information to facilitate the appropriation of new knowledge, technologies, processes and encourage technological change in the region.

As stated in the Cartagena de India's Declaration, countries in the LAC region are pursuing the idea to foster a digital regional market. In the new global economic and technological context, LAC countries face important challenges, in terms of having a coordinated reduction of barriers that hinder digital cross-border digital trade and investment in digital markets in the region. With the aim of facilitating the debate regarding the configuration of a more integrated regional digital market in 2019, UNECLAC publish the report "The regulation of cross-border electronic commerce in trade agreements". This document analyzes how LAC countries have sought to regulate electronic commerce in their commercial agreements, initially with extra-regional partners and more recently in some intra-regional agreements. The study found that there is no single pattern, but families of agreements whose content fundamentally reflects the philosophy of the respective partner, the United States and the European Union (EU). This gives rise to a great regulatory heterogeneity, both in aspects related to market access and in those related to the regulatory environment of electronic commerce. The study suggested that countries in the region should seek to coordinate their positions about electronic commerce, specially related to the recently initiated debates within the World Trade Organization.

For the preparation of the eLAC2022 digital agenda draft, which will be reviewed during the preparatory meeting in Quito Ecuador in 2019, a survey to focal points and observers was carried out, in addition to a consultation to the working groups and the review of other references. The proposal aims to give continuity to the agreements and to provide inputs for the political dialogue that will take place in the Seventh Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in 2020.

III. Innovative policies, programmes and projects

Artificial intelligence (AI) is developing rapidly around the world, and countries like China, the United States, and the European Union members are leading the research and the adoption artificial intelligence and have implemented specific actions in their respective economic agendas to foster the diffusion of this technology. Latin American countries have the capacity to harness the full potential of AI, however, due to social and economic limitations, little investment has been made in government, industry and research to advance in AI. This is a disadvantage, since AI is an important and fundamental technology in the fourth industrial revolution, and given its multipurpose nature, exponential power and predictive capacity could be an important tool to address various challenges that affect the development of the region. In this context, UN ECLAC and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) along with other international organizations, will held in January 2020, the AI Latin American summit. The event aims to raise awareness in the region about the transformational potential of AI. This initiative will bring leaders and key stakeholders from governments, industry and academia to share views, exchange knowledge, best practices and experiences.

Fintech has a great potential for financial inclusion. Eight countries in the LAC region have recent regulations on fintech or expect to have some type of regulation soon (ECLAC, 2018). Within this framework in 2018, ECLAC and the University of Cambridge sign an MOU for furthering collaborative research in the area of fintech. The possibilities for collaboration, includes a joint research programme in Latin America and the Caribbean host by ECLAC as a part of wider cross-regional network of collaborations for alternative finance, the Cambridge Alternative Finance Collaboration Network (CAFCN). The CCAF and ECLAC will establish a regional hub of CAFCN in Santiago, Chile, this hub would collaborate and work closely with a wide variety of national and regional stakeholders across regulation, industry and academia to conduct empirical research and an array of activities to promote sustainable financial innovation and evidence-based regulatory innovation.

UNECLAC is leading a project to improve national capacities in Latin America and the Caribbean countries to measure the digital economy using Big Data tools and techniques and their combination with official statistics for the design of digital policies. Among the activities that UNECLAC lead within the project are the organizations of workshops on "Big Data for the measurement of the digital economy". These workshops were aimed to debate conceptual, technical and methodological aspects behind the use of Big Data for the measurement of the digital economy. In 2019, two workshops were organized one in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in April and another in Bogotá, Colombia in May. Likewise, a study that seeks to combine web data with administrative records of firms began, with the objective of having an alternative characterization of the Internet economy in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and Chile, results of the study are expected in 2020.

Regarding partnerships, UNECLAC continued to build alliances with the private sector; the civil society and the technical community. These efforts have resulted in the organization of a series of activities, including a set of seminars. One of these events were "CLT, Latin American Telecommunications Congress", held in Cordoba, Argentina in July 2019. This event was organized by UNECLAC, the Latin American Bank of Development (CAF), Iberoamerican Association of Telecommunications Companies (ASIET), and GSMA. Among the participants were policymakers and representatives from the education sector, non-governmental organizations and the ICT industry.

UNECLAC has also led several activities to improve national capabilities in the LAC region for the design of digital policies in 2019. One of this activity is the summer school: "Digital Transformation in Latin America ". This summer school is an initiative of UNECLAC, the Barcelona Institute for International Studies (IBEI) and the Latin American Bank of Development (CAF). The programme seeks to discuss the impact of new digital technologies, such as Big Data analytics, the Internet of the Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence, in the economy and the society. The training is aimed to policy makers and professionals from the private sector and NGOs. The sixth edition of the summer school took place in Barcelona in July 2019, with the participation of representatives from 6 LAC countries.

Regarding the production of ICT statistics, UNECLAC has continued to support the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC), collecting data from household surveys on ICT access and use for 16 countries. OSILAC maintains and update a database, which allows the calculation of ICT and socioeconomic

indicators and its analysis over time and among the Latin American countries. This information is published through the statistical portal of UNECLAC (CEPALStat).

UNECLAC has also continued to support the Regional Broadband Observatory (ORBA), which has been periodically carrying out the collection of statistical information on the development of broadband in the LAC region. The information includes statistics on access, use and quality of the fixed and mobile broadband Internet service. This information is processed from different sources such as the International Telecommunication Unit (ITU) database, household surveys and the collection of data on tariffs based on web public of service providers and other sources (e.g. Statista, Akamai and bnamericas). The information collected allow to calculate indicators about Internet users by age, by geographical area, by gender and statistics on fixed and mobile broadband rates and connection speeds.

IV. Future Actions

- Give continuity to the agreements of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean and hold the next Ministerial Conference in 2020. During this meeting a draft of the new Digital Agenda will be presented.
- UNECLAC will continue to act as the technical secretariat of the eLAC process, generating statistical information, research and supporting the steering committee of the process. UNECLAC will be also coordinating the working groups on the following topics: i) Digital access and infrastructure, ii) Culture, inclusion and digital skills, iii) Internet governance for the information society, iv) Digital transformation and digital economy, v) Regional Digital Market, vi) Cyber legislation, vii) Digital government and emerging technologies and viii) Telework.
- UNECLAC will facilitate the organization of the preparatory meeting for Seven Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, to be held Ecuador in 2020.
- In 2020 UNECLAC is expected to organized one seminar about Artificial Intelligence in Latin America with the cooperation of MIT.
- In 2020, UNECLAC will deepen its research agenda on issues related to the digital transformation of the productive sector, the future of work, telecommunications infrastructure (5G), Regional digital market, cross border data flows and cyberlegislacion. Also, progress will be made in research about the use of Big Data for measuring the Internet economy in Mexico, Brasil, Colombia and Chile.