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Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2023 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 27th 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.

UNECLAC- IMPLEMENTATION OF WSIS ACTION LINES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN 2022-2023

I. Executive Summary

ECLAC as co-facilitator of action 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, in 2022 focused its efforts on promoting the implementation of the WSIS outcomes in the LAC region by fostering policy dialogue among member States, leading research, providing technical assistance, training, and generating statistical information about access and use of digital technologies.

In 2022 ECLAC co-hosted with the government of Uruguay the Eight Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, from the 16 to 18 of November (https://conferenciaelac.cepal.org/8/es). At the conference 13 countries and government representatives agreed on a new version of Digital agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean towards 2024 (eLAC2024). The Ministerial conference included an opening session, followed by the presentation of the position paper prepared by ECLAC "A digital path for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean" and 13 Panel discussions on: investment, infrastructure and connectivity, governance and regulation, innovation, entrepreneurship, inclusion, the job market and employment, cybersecurity, measurement, agritech, digital trade, green transition, smart cities, digital government and cooperation.

The Digital Agenda eLAC2024 sets out strategic objectives at the regional level grouped into four axes. The first axis addresses the promotion of universal and inclusive digitization, mainly linked to infrastructure, connectivity, the skills development and competences, and essential elements to move towards better governance, security and enabling environment. The second axis corresponds to productive and sustainable digital transformation, incorporating aspects related to the digital economy, entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainability, in a context where climate change and the reduction of environmental impacts are becoming more relevant. The third axis is linked to digital transformation for social welfare and incorporates issues related to inclusion, innovation, and the digital transformation of the State or e-government. The fourth axis refers to the generation of new alliances and incorporates actions related to trade integration, the regional digital market and cooperation. Overall, the eLAC2024 Digital Agenda brings together 31 objectives. The gender perspective is a transversal topic to the 2024 Digital Agenda. The document also incorporates a list of indicators create to monitor and follow-up the agenda.

The Digital Agenda eLAC2024 acknowledges that digital technologies are essential instruments to boost productivity and growth and they have significant effects in various critical areas related to development such as health, education, and government services. It also considers vulnerabilities related to this process. In this context, Latin America and the Caribbean must apply a set of policies that aim to narrow the digital divide and foster innovation and technological development. In this regard, the countries of the region must strengthen institutions, modernize the regulatory framework, improve coordination

between different areas and levels of government, and promote dialogue between the public and private sectors as a basis for achieving common goals.

The year 2023 marks 18 years since the adoption of the first action plan on the information society in Latin America and the Caribbean which was adopted in Rio de Janeiro in the year 2005.   This plan aimed to consolidate a common vision on the role of digital technologies in promoting development.   This space has been successful in renewing its agreements with the organization of the eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean.

II.   Analytical Overview

a.   Policy trends and contributions

At the regional level ECLAC promoted the implementation of the WSIS action lines through its role as the technical secretary of eLAC, working alongside various stakeholders on numerous activities.

In 2022 and 2023, ECLAC published various reports related to digital technologies and development. Some of the key publications were:

5G networks in Latin America: development and potential: The objective of this document is to examine the main characteristics of fifth generation (5G) networks and their current development rate in the world and in some selected countries in Latin America. Accordingly, the potential impact that these new generation mobile networks could have on digital transformation processes and on the configuration of smart cities is analyzed.

A digital path to sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean: This document analyzes how the greater adoption of digital technologies, especially the most advanced ones associated with the intensive use of data and intelligent solutions, is generating disruptions in consumption, business and production models, which enable new forms of value creation with potential effects on the well-being of people, the competitiveness of the economy and the environmental protection. Currently, digitalization is considered a key instrument for the transition and has a new development model that is more inclusive and sustainable.

Measuring the Internet economy in Latin America: cases from Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico: This study develops a methodology that allows companies to be classified according to their use of the Internet, without the need to restrict themselves to traditional industrial classifications, which generates a new characterization: the Internet economy. The study allows experimenting with the possibilities offered by the use of big data techniques and tools to improve the understanding of digital transformation and it serves as a basis for future investigations.

Analysis of data governance models in the public sector: a look from Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Ciudad de México and São Paulo: This document focuses on the experiences of Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Ciudad de México and São Paulo, and analyzes its organizational framework, the integration and interoperability of the data ecosystem and the regulatory aspects of its availability and use of data. The analysis is the result of a review of public information and interviews with officials responsible for leading data governance in cities.

During this period, ECLAC organized various workshops and policy dialogues about the adoption of digital technologies, some of which we described below:

AI for the sustainable development of Latin America: Launch of the first Latin American Artificial Intelligence Index: During this event held on August 11, 2023, the preliminary results of the Artificial Intelligence Index for Latin America and the Caribbean were presented, promoting a debate about the need to move towards a vision of the benefits and threats of AI was discussed, and its link with digital transformation agendas and its productive, social and institutional impact.

Digital Trade: Building a Competitive Regulatory Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean: This event took place between September 21 and 22, 2023, This conference aimed to exchange knowledge on digital trade regulations and policies and their importance for the economy in Latin America and the Caribbean. To this end, this meeting convened government officials and experts from international organizations and academic institutions, such as ECLAC, OECD and EUI, to share their vision and perspectives on this issue and the tools for its measurement.

Seminar Cybersecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean: In this event held on August 24, 2023, the objective was to know the actions that are being adopted in cybersecurity, at regional level, and to discuss the main challenges facing Chile in this area, to move towards the definition of an analytical framework, which will be an integral part of their Digital Transformation Strategy.

School of Digital Transformation and Innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean 2023: The school was developed from December 11 to 15, 2023 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, this school was conceived as a capacity building program to provide relevant content to policymakers through lectures, mini-courses, case studies, peer learning and discussions.

From Digital Government to Smart Government: Held from August 2 to September 13, 2023, this virtual school was held, seeking to strengthen capacities to provide solutions to the needs of citizens and organizations through Digital Government, and incorporate new knowledge to advance evidence-based decision-making and data-based policies.

Development of strategic capacities on public policies for the promotion of electronic commerce: This course was developed from April 18 to May 25, 2022, with the objective of strengthening the knowledge and capacities of public policy makers and managers on the enabling elements of domestic and cross-border electronic commerce, and its use as an instrument for generating opportunities and development for people and MSMEs in the United States. region.

III. Innovative policies, programs and projects

In 2022 and 2023, ECLAC has continued to promote the development of a Digital Development Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean. The observatory aims to develop metrics and information to understand the dynamics of digitalization in Latin America and the Caribbean. Among the specific objectives of the observatory are to identify the thematic areas that require more research and data to understand their dynamics and identify policies to promote their development, generate quantitative and

qualitative information in different areas related to digital development, disseminate metrics and up-to-date information, in a clear and easy-to-interpret manner for users and develop studies in several critical areas for the digital development of the region.

During 2023 ECLAC has also joined the EU-LAC Digital Alliance, a project that creates a strategic framework to foster substantial bi-regional cooperation across the full spectrum of digital and space issues. The Alliance addresses digital transformation and innovation based on a shared commitment to a human-centric vision of the digital economy and society. Governments, private stakeholders, international finance institutions, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society, and academia are involved in its implementation.

ECLAC has also supported the development of the Public Policy Bogotá Smart Territory 2023-2032, the policy seeks to consolidate Bogotá as a Smart Territory by promoting the use and exploitation of data, technology and innovation by the actors and sectors of the territory, for the solution of problems and the generation of opportunities that improve the quality of life of people.

Regarding partnerships, ECLAC continued to build alliances with the private sector; the civil society and the technical community.

IV. Future Actions

- Organize the Ninth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean in Chile in 2024.

- ECLAC will continue to act as the technical secretariat of the eLAC2024 process, generating statistical information, research, tehcnical cooperation and supporting the steering committee.

- ECLAC will continue its efforts to develop a Digital Development Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean to support evidence based policies to foster the digital economy.

- In 2023 and 2024, UNECLAC will deepen its research agenda on issues related to the digital transformation of the productive sector, artificial inteligence, infraestructure (5G), digital trade, data governance, egoverment and cybersecturity.