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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international  
organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2022 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 26<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.

**DISCLAIMER:** The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

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

### I. Executive Summary

ECLAC 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, in 2020 aim 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.

In 2022 ECLAC co-host with the government of Ecuador the Preparatory Meeting for the Eight Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, on September 21th (face to face and with virtual participation) (<https://www.cepal.org/es/eventos/reunion-preparatoria-la-octava-conferencia-ministerial-la-sociedad-la-informacion-america>). At conference 19 countries and government representatives agreed on draft proposal for a digital agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean towards 2024 (eLAC2024).

The draft Digital Agenda eLAC2024 presented at the preparatory meeting sets out a set of policy priorities and strategic actions at the regional level into four axes. The first axis is related to the bases to promote universal and inclusive digitization, mainly linked to infrastructure, connectivity, the development of skills and competences, and essential elements to move towards better governance, security and enabling environment. The second axis corresponds to the 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 impact 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. 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 distributed in four axes. The gender perspective is a transversal axis to the 2024 Digital Agenda and must be understood from this approach.

The Digital Agenda eLAC2024 acknowledges that digital technologies are essential instruments to boost productivity and growth in countries and they have significant effects in various critical areas related to development such as health, education, and government services. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consider technological advances essential for the identification of permanent solutions to economic, social, and environmental challenges, reflecting among their main targets the significant increase in access to information and communications technologies and the Internet in least developed countries.

The year 2022 marks 17 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 and towards the organization of the eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean should update policy priorities at the regional level but also address challenges to improve the exchange of best practices, capacity building, public and private dialogue, and knowledge generation.

## II. Analytical Overview

### a. Policy trends and contributions

At 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 2021 and 2022, ECLAC published various reports and led initiatives related to digital technologies and development.

In 2021 ECLAC published the report [“Digital transformation of SMEs: elements for policy design”](#). In this publication, ECLAC offer conceptual and practical tools to analyze the process of digital transformation of companies in Latin America and the Caribbean and suggestions to design policies that facilitate digital transformation. Also. During 2021, ECLAC published [“Digitalization and technological change in agricultural and agroindustrial SMEs in Latin America”](#). This document analyzes trends in the adoption of digital technologies in companies and SMEs in the agricultural sector, with the aim of proposing new ideas to promote a digitalization process that helps to accelerate a transition to a more inclusive and sustainable food system.

In relation to the promotion of cross-border electronic commerce and regional integration, ECLAC led a series of initiatives and activities in coordination with integration bodies. Among this work is the support given to the Pacific Alliance (AP), Mercosur and ALADI. For example, ECLAC organized in the framework of the AP a [Public-Private Dialogue on the Regional Digital Market](#), where the road map for the regional digital market for the AP and its plan of implementation was shared with actors from the private sector, the academy and civil society. Additional to this work ECLAC and Mercosur organized the seminar: [The role of Mercosur in the promotion of cross-border electronic commerce and the construction of the regional digital market](#). The seminar aimed to establish a deep dialogue between: government agencies involved in areas related to electronic commerce, international organizations and marketplaces interested in actions to increase regional cross-border e-commerce, especially for SMEs.

In October 2022, ECLAC together with Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) organized the workshop [“Fostering e-commerce in Latin America”](#). This workshop aimed to analyze potential cooperation spaces for the elaboration of a joint work agenda between the member countries of ALADI, using as a basis the objectives expressed in various digital agendas of trade organizations (Pacific Alliance, Andean Community and Mercosur), on cross-border electronic commerce. This activity is part of a series of workshops for the exchange of experiences and best practices.

During 2021 and 2022, ECLAC also led various activities related to training on e-commerce policies. For example, in September 2021, organized the workshop [“Opportunities and challenges for SMEs in cross-border e-commerce”](#). The course organized by ECLAC and UNCTAD had the objective of training policy makers on good practices to improve the

capabilities of SMEs in the process of international insertion through cross-border e-commerce. A similar course was provided in May 2022 with cooperation between ECLAC and the Regional Center for the Promotion of SMEs (CENPROMYPE).

Also, in 2022 ECLAC organized the workshop [“Update and future of universal service funds in Latin America and the Caribbean”](#). This event forms part of the activities organized within the framework of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2022) with the support of Internet Society (ISOC) and the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI).

ECLAC also participated in the 2022 WSIS Forum, specifically in the workshop on ICTs Access and Affordability in Developing Countries for Digital Inclusion.

### **III. Innovative policies, programs and projects**

In 2022, ECLAC lead the development of a [Digital Economy 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 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.

One of the key areas of work during 2021 and 2022 was related to support the creation of a regional digital market. In this context, ECLAC provided technical support for the Pacific Alliance (AP) for the conformation of a Regional Digital Market (MDR). The MDR can promote a harmonious economic space for the exchange of services and products by digital means. A market of these characteristics can promote commercial exchange between the member countries, in addition to encouraging investment and development of services, applications and innovations. However, it is not only a question of removing barriers across borders, but also of encouraging the use and benefit of digital technologies, creating the confidence necessary for companies and people to participate actively in the digital economy. This work is detail in the following publication [“A regional digital market strategy for the Alliance of the Pacific”](#).

Since SMEs are key to economic and social development in Latin America, they represent 99% of companies and 67% of employment, ECLAC develop several activities to try to improve policies aim to digitize smaller companies. Within this framework, various studies have been produced on the adoption of digital technologies in SMEs and training courses to support ecommerce. Part of this work is included in the document [“Digital transformation of SMEs: elements for policy design”](#).

One of the cooperation activities that ECLAC carried out during 2022 was the elaboration of the [2035 Digital Strategy for Chile](#), which was an initiative led by the Senate. The initiative was built based on a participatory process that convened representatives of the public sector, the business world, academia and civil society, all relevant players in the country's digital ecosystem. This process has sought to develop a consensus diagnosis, which will serve as a basis for the definition of strategic guidelines that help to assimilate the challenges and opportunities resulting from the rapid technological change.

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

#### **IV. Future Actions**

- Organize the Eight Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo, Uruguay between 16 and 18 of November 2022.
- ECLAC will continue to act as the technical secretariat of the eLAC2024 process, generating statistical information, research, technical cooperation and supporting the steering committee.
- ECLAC will continue its efforts to develop a Digital Economy Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean to support evidence based policies to foster the digital economy.
- In 2022, UNECLAC will deepen its research agenda on issues related to the digital transformation of the productive sector, infrastructure (5G), regional digital market, cross border data flows and the digital economy.