

# **COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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## **Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2025 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 29<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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## UNECLAC- IMPLEMENTATION OF WSIS ACTION LINES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN 2025

### I. Relevant activities

As co-facilitator of Action Lines C1 (the role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in ICTs for development), C6 (enabling environment), and C11 (international and regional cooperation), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has continued to advance the implementation of WSIS outcomes in the region. Its work in 2025 focused on strengthening policy dialogue, producing research and evidence, providing technical assistance, and building statistical capacities related to access, use, and impact of digital technologies.

ECLAC's support has been particularly visible in the implementation of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC), whose vision towards 2026 was agreed during the Ninth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society held in November 2024. The eLAC2026 Agenda is structured around three main axes—connectivity and digital infrastructure, digital governance and security, and innovation with emphasis on artificial intelligence for sustainable development—and three thematic pillars: digital transformation for productive development, for well-being, and for the modernization of the State. Altogether, it comprises 38 strategic objectives aimed at harnessing digital transformation for a productive, inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

To implement this agenda, ECLAC has concentrated its efforts on four complementary areas.

- **Working Groups and Measurement Commission:** Four working groups have been established on Digital Economy, Meaningful Connectivity, Artificial Intelligence, and a dedicated group for the Caribbean, fostering technical dialogue and the exchange of experiences among policymakers. In addition, a Measurement Commission was created to support the monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of the Digital Agenda.
- **Digital Transformation Lab:** A space for methodological and technological innovation to support evidence-based policy for LAC governments.
- **Digital Development Observatory:** A regional platform that consolidates statistical data on digital adoption with more than 85 indicators (<https://desarrollodigital.cepal.org/es>).
- **Capacity Building:** Initiatives such as the School of Digital Transformation and Innovation.

In addition, ECLAC also provides technical assistance to countries in various areas related to digital transformation. Just to mention a few examples, we have helped design indicators to measure meaningful connectivity, developed regulatory sandboxes for the use of AI applications, analyzed regional digital infrastructure to support policymaking and regional integration, and provided tools to assess the level of business digitalization in different countries.

### II. Analytical Overview

### **a. Policy trends and contributions**

In 2025, ECLAC consolidated its role as a regional reference in digital policy by leading a series of initiatives that combined research, capacity building, and regional cooperation. A central highlight was the Second Edition of the School of Digital Transformation and Innovation for the Caribbean, held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, in June. This edition placed particular emphasis on the vulnerabilities and structural challenges of Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS), which face high connectivity costs, fragile digital infrastructure, and exposure to climate-related risks that affect their capacity to build resilient digital ecosystems. By engaging mid- and senior-level policymakers, the school provided a platform not only for technical training but also for peer-to-peer exchange, enabling countries to share lessons learned and best practices. Topics such as meaningful connectivity, governance of artificial intelligence, and infrastructure resilience were addressed through case studies, simulations, and hands-on sessions. As a result, participants returned to their institutions with enhanced analytical and strategic capacities to design policies that narrow digital divides and foster inclusive digitalization in contexts of vulnerability.

Also in September 2025, the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Digital Transformation School in LATAM was jointly organized by ECLAC, CAF – Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, Cetic.br|NIC.br, and the Latin American and Caribbean Technical Internet Community (LACNIC, ICANN, Internet Society, LACTLD, LAC-IX, LACNOG, and RedCLARA). This eleventh edition brought together leading experts, policymakers, and researchers to discuss how innovation and digitalization can drive the region's development, with a special focus on meaningful connectivity as its central theme. The program covered key topics such as digital infrastructure and regulation, Internet governance, digital inclusion and skills, and the role of artificial intelligence in productive transformation—offering a space for learning, exchange, and collaboration across the region.

Earlier in the year, ECLAC organized the regional conference “AI in Latin America and the Caribbean: challenges, strategies and governance for development,” which brought together a wide range of stakeholders including governments, international organizations, the private sector, academia, and civil society. The event underscored both the transformative potential and the risks of artificial intelligence in the region. Discussions focused on opportunities to apply AI to improve education systems, strengthen health services, enhance government transparency, and drive productive development, while also addressing ethical concerns, data protection, and the need for regulatory frameworks. The conference provided a unique space for advancing consensus around responsible AI governance and reinforced the importance of aligning national AI strategies with regional priorities for sustainable development.

Complementing these high-level dialogues, ECLAC also advanced more practical and technical training activities. The workshop “Boosting Productivity with Generative AI,” held in March 2025, offered policymakers, public officials, and professionals a concrete understanding of how generative AI tools can be applied to improve efficiency, foster innovation, and expand service delivery. By combining theoretical insights with practical exercises, the workshop enhanced participants' ability to adopt AI responsibly, balancing the drive for innovation with safeguards against risks such as bias, misuse, or over-dependence on imported technological solutions. These capacity-building activities

illustrate ECLAC's commitment to equipping the region not only with strategic visions but also with the skills and tools needed for implementation.

As part of the Digital Transformation Lab, ECLAC launched the Digital Productive Transformation Simulator, an innovative instrument that leverages economic complexity methodologies to help countries identify productive opportunities associated with digital technologies. This tool allows governments to simulate potential pathways for digital transformation, assessing which sectors offer the greatest potential for technological upgrading and diversification. The Lab has also expanded its portfolio with complementary tools such as the Regulatory Sandbox Maturity Assessment (RESMA), which supports governments in evaluating their readiness to implement regulatory sandboxes; and the GET DIGITAL (*Digitalizate*) initiative, which enables firms—particularly small and medium-sized enterprises—to self-assess their level of digital maturity and receive guidance on advancing their transformation. These instruments represent good practices in methodological innovation, offering replicable models that link evidence-based policymaking with practical interventions.

Beyond its internal initiatives, ECLAC strengthened international cooperation through its active role in the EU–LAC Digital Alliance. In 2025, the Commission helped organize regional policy forums in Jamaica, Brazil and Guatemala which provided important platforms for dialogue between Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. These forums facilitated the exchange of experiences in areas such as artificial intelligence governance, digital infrastructure investment, and the development of inclusive digital ecosystems. They also created opportunities for new partnerships, joint projects, and alignment of regional priorities with global digital agendas.

ECLAC continued to reinforce the knowledge base for policymaking through research and publications. Two key studies stand out: the report “Economic Impact of Artificial Intelligence in Latin America”, which develops a theoretical and econometric model to estimate the macroeconomic effects of AI adoption on productivity and growth; and the study “Determinants of the Adoption of Artificial Intelligence in Companies: The Case of Brazil”, which applies microdata analysis to identify the main drivers and barriers to AI adoption. Together, these reports contribute valuable empirical evidence at both the macroeconomic and firm levels, helping governments understand not only the opportunities linked to AI but also the structural conditions—such as human capital, firm size, and access to complementary technologies—that must be addressed to ensure its widespread and equitable diffusion.

ECLAC also published the Latin American Artificial Intelligence Index (ILIA) a regional initiative that measures the development, adoption, and governance of artificial intelligence across countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. It provides a comprehensive framework of indicators organized around key dimensions—enabling factors, research and development, adoption and use, and governance and ethics—to assess countries' progress in building inclusive and sustainable AI ecosystems.

Finally, ECLAC has been actively engaged in global processes related to digital policy and governance. The Commission contributed to the implementation of the Global Digital Compact (GDC), including its implementation matrix and thematic working groups, ensuring that regional perspectives are reflected in global digital cooperation frameworks. In addition, ECLAC served as co-chair of the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) and participated in the WSIS Forum 2025, strengthening multilateral

dialogue and fostering alignment between global commitments and regional digital development priorities.

Through these combined efforts—capacity building, policy dialogue, methodological innovation, and evidence generation—ECLAC has demonstrated a comprehensive and integrated approach to advancing WSIS outcomes in the region. Its initiatives in 2025 highlight the importance of linking high-level regional agendas with practical tools and country-level implementation, thereby consolidating ECLAC's leadership as a catalyst for digital transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **III. Future Actions**

Looking ahead, ECLAC will:

- Continue as **technical secretariat of the eLAC2026 Agenda**, coordinating working groups and fostering cooperation.
- Expand the **Digital Development Observatory**, strengthening evidence-based policymaking.
- Further develop the **Digital Transformation Lab**, focusing on regulatory sandboxes, computational modeling of the digital economy, and resources for data science projects.
- Deepen research on the **digital transformation of the productive sector, artificial intelligence, and meaningful connectivity**, in order to reduce structural gaps and enhance sustainable development in the region.

#### **Suggested paragraph for the SG report:**

In 2025, ECLAC supported the implementation of the eLAC2026 Digital Agenda through four areas of action: (1) the coordination of regional working groups on the digital economy—meaningful connectivity, artificial intelligence, and a specific group for the Caribbean, which foster technical dialogue and policy exchange—and a measurement commission; (2) the consolidation of the Digital Development Observatory, which provides data and indicators to monitor digital transformation in the region; (3) the organization of capacity-building initiatives such as the School of Digital Transformation and Innovation, aimed at equipping policymakers with advanced knowledge and skills; and (4) the Digital Transformation Lab, which has become an innovation hub offering governments concrete methodological and technological tools, such as the Digital Productive Transformation Simulator, RESMA, and the GET DIGITAL initiative, all designed to support evidence-based policymaking and accelerate digital transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC has also led high-level policy dialogues, such as the EU-LAC Digital Alliance High-Level Dialogues on digital issues. In addition, it has played a leadership role in global coordination mechanisms, including serving as Vice-Chair of UNGIS (the United Nations Group on the Information Society).