eLAC2015

**Building inclusive
and innovative
digital societies**

Third Ministerial Conference on the Information
Society in Latin America and the Caribbean

Lima, 21-23 November, 2010

DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (eLAC2015)[1]
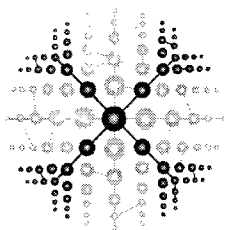
UNITED NATIONS

E C L A C

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[1] This is the version of the draft Plan of Action eLAC2015 agreed upon at the regional preparatory conference for the third Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo on 23 and 24 September 2010, incorporating editorial changes made by ECLAC.

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I. LINES OF ACTION AND PRIORITIES

A. ACCESS

1. Line of action: achieving access for all

For the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the universalization of broadband access in the twenty-first century is as important for growth and equality as were electric power and road infrastructures in the twentieth century. Broadband is an essential service for the economic and social development of the countries of the region, and it is indispensable for progress, equality and democracy. That is why the strategic goal is for broadband Internet access to be available to all of the citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Attainment of this goal requires rapid progress in reducing access fees and increasing bandwidth, based on more robust telecommunications systems that remain able to provide services even in the event of major natural disasters. This necessitates proactive public policymaking. It will be necessary to foster the expansion of supply, taking advantage of new kinds of access such as wireless technologies and interactive digital television. The State will have to be actively involved in order to ensure universal access to broadband, by encouraging private investment, allocating part of its general funds, or investing directly or through public-private partnerships, in keeping with the strategies of each country. The objective for the next five years is to make substantial progress in universalizing broadband access. This progress should focus especially on reducing social and regional inequalities, especially in poorly supplied urban districts and remote and rural areas.

Considering that the region has begun a transition to digital television that will diversify the options for access to high-speed Internet and expand the available applications, it is essential to encourage regional cooperation among countries that have adopted similar or different digital television standards. Efforts must be made to promote the production of interactive and interoperable content and services, together with cooperation in developing integrative devices such as set-top boxes, based on common standards, in order to expand the supply of and access to interactive digital platforms. The convergence of digital television and other means of access to high-speed Internet should also be promoted.

The countries of the region face the challenge of continually enhancing their emergency and security plans for natural disasters such as storms, earthquakes, floods and tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and mudslides, which occur frequently in Latin America and the Caribbean. To this end, information and early warning systems, robust government communications networks and reliable telecommunications services, whether land- or satellite-based, are essential for people to be able to communicate, using mobile phones, computers or open interactive digital television, among other media. The countries of the region commit to continuing to work together to ensure that digital technologies and networks, including academic networks, are an effective tool for such public policies, which should seek to ensure the continuity of essential services.

2. Priority: achieve a leap towards universal broadband access

Goal 1: Increase direct public investment in broadband to make it available in all public establishments.

Goal 2: Advance towards universal availability of reasonably priced broadband in homes, enterprises and public access centres, with a view to at least 50% of the Latin American and Caribbean population having access to multiple convergent services through different digital platforms by 2015.

Goal 3: Coordinate efforts to bring down the costs of international links by means of a larger and more efficient regional and subregional broadband infrastructure, the inclusion of (at least) the necessary ducts for fibre optic cables in regional infrastructure projects; the creation of Internet exchange points; the promotion of innovation and local content production; and the attraction of contents suppliers and distributors.

Goal 4: Collaborate and coordinate with all regional stakeholders including academia and business, the technical community and organizations working in the field, such as the Latin American and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry (LACNIC) and the Internet Society (ISOC), among others, to ensure that Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) is broadly deployed in the region by 2015; and implement, as soon as possible, national plans to make government public services portals in Latin America and the Caribbean accessible over IPv6 and to make public sector networks native IPv6 capable.

B. E-GOVERNMENT

1. Line of action: treating e-government as a citizens' right

The Latin American and Caribbean region is already well on the way to developing e-government, which will make it possible to transform the public sectors, meeting citizens' demands for more effective and efficient public administration, achieving greater equity and inclusion in access to public services, improving State transparency and deepening democracy.

However, evidence shows that much remains to be done. The range of administrative formalities and public services available online is still small and efforts to improve the quality of existing services are still incipient. Interoperability between government services is scant, leading to significant inefficiencies and difficulties in providing effective services for citizens. Many municipalities lack access to broadband. The difficulty of combining an increased use of information and communication technologies (ICT) with improved public management is also a concern.

Progress must be made in building and strengthening systems to protect and access public and common goods through ICT, based on three pillars: (i) support for improving the operational efficiency of public institutions; (ii) improving access to public goods by reducing the costs of transactions between governments and citizens; and (iii) generating infrastructure.

To address these challenges progress is required in at least the following areas: increase the range of open data and improve the quality of information available online to citizens and businesses; make administrative formalities and services available online, on a mass scale, for different electronic devices and digital technologies; support decision-making through ICT; ensure that all local governments provide transactional services to citizens; expedite the use of ICT in justice and health-care systems and in the administration of citizens' rights; encourage public administration coordination and interoperability based

on open standards, while respecting the protection of personal data; complete the legal and regulatory framework for ICT to capitalize on their potential and meet society's greatest needs; and develop national strategies to build confidence in the use of ICT in public administration e-government modalities.

2. Priority: achieve transactional and participatory e-government

Goal 5: Make as much data and information and as many administrative formalities and services as possible available online to citizens and enterprises, with an emphasis on quality and on the needs of the lower-income population and microenterprises and SMEs, accessible through multiple electronic networks, devices and media and digital technologies, such as computers, mobile telephony and open interactive digital television.

Goal 6: Provide the necessary tools to support capacity-building in local governments and local government agencies for the deployment of applications, interactive content and services for the local population.

Goal 7: Make the necessary regulatory changes to increase public services interoperability by means of open standards, without detriment to the protection of personal data and trade secrecy, security or systems stability.

Goal 8: Ensure that all the countries of the region have computer emergency response tems (CERTs), promote the creation of computer security incident response teams (CSIRTs) and develop methods of interaction and coordination in response to security incidents, as well as exchanging know-how and experience, based on a methodology developed with regard for the reality in the region as regards the creation and managements of CERTs and CSIRTs.

C. ENVIRONMENT

1. Line of action: expanding the use of ICT for environmental management

ICT support early warning of natural disasters and emergency response, as well as efforts to combat climate change. However, the rapid entry of Latin America and the Caribbean into the information age has meant the consumption of increasing volumes of ICT that have a relatively short useful life because of constant technological progress, significantly increasing the production of electronic and digital waste. The countries of the region therefore commit to promoting the rational and responsible use of ICT, with a view to environmental conservation, and to promote combined efforts by users, suppliers and governments to use ICT in a more environmentally efficient manner.

2. Priority: support early warning of natural disasters and emergency response, and combat climate change

Goal 9: Establish regional and subregional frameworks for the use of ICT in natural disasters and emergency prevention and response, based on common standards, since natural disasters transcend the national sphere.

Goal 10: Incorporate into existing regional coordination forums on environmental matters the issue of proper management of electrical and electronic waste, based on common standards for refurbishing, costing, treatment, removal and final disposal, promoting also the responsible use of electronic and technological devices by governments, firms and households.

D. SOCIAL SECURITY

1. Line of action: promoting the use of ICT for inclusive social security

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant progress in the social sphere over the past five years. But poverty and inequality persist, as do informality and unemployment. The countries therefore commit to boosting the use of digital technologies and networks in all spheres of social security. This poses enormous public policy challenges.

On the one hand, health care coverage and quality for the most vulnerable sectors must be improved, taking into consideration the significant changes in morbidity while ensuring a poverty-free old age for a burgeoning population of older persons. Moreover, the growing movement of persons among countries poses the challenge of applying integrated strategies, both for health care and for epidemiological surveillance. Given the incipient development of digital technologies and networks in health-care systems, the major challenge is to integrate e-health with national strategies and regional cooperation in this sphere.

On the other hand, progress must be made in universalizing the right to social protection in a context of high employment insecurity. We believe that digital technologies and networks are powerful tools for enhancing policies for social provision, unemployment insurance, access to justice and combating extreme poverty. Correctly applied, such technologies will not only make these policies more effective; they will also increase public confidence in the institutions that apply them.

We believe it is essential for the countries of the region to strengthen their digital strategies in the health sector in order to improve the coverage and quality of health care, especially for the most vulnerable sectors. It is also essential to promote dialogue and cooperation with a view to developing the technical and legal bases for telemedicine and electronic medical records, taking into account international best practices and personal data protection.

2. Priority: use ICT to ensure access, security and continuity of health care for users of health services

Goal 11: Move ahead in ICT-based, comprehensive health-care management, with an emphasis on broadband connectivity in hospitals and health centres, interoperability and electronic clinical records.

Goal 12: Develop regional interoperability for epidemiological cooperation and enhance the use of ICT in order to improve the coordination of health-care systems in border areas.

E. PRODUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

1. First line of action: driving a wave of innovation for enterprise in the region

The massification of technologies and digital networks provides opportunities for new waves of innovation, especially for national technology enterprises. The countries signing the Plan of Action for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2015) commit to fostering the policies and regulatory changes —including the convergence of television, telephony and radio— that are needed to turn those opportunities into realities that ensure greater productivity and well-being for societies in the countries of the region.

Producing interactive content and making it available across such diverse platforms as computers, telephony and digital television is a challenge of considerable proportions for Latin America and the Caribbean.

But it also provides a historic opportunity to develop a software industry, applications and digital services that are functional for all economic and social sectors.

Promoting this new industry requires proactive public policies that should encompass at least two complementary considerations. On the one hand, they should encourage public-sector upgrades with a national impact and high ICT content. E-government functions require highly innovative applications. The same is true of services such as traceability systems, account payments and the provision of free public services by mobile phone or open interactive digital television. All of these are high-impact initiatives and provide an opportunity for national enterprises engaged in digital applications and content, particularly microenterprises, SMEs and independent producers, to capitalize on their potential for creation and innovation.

Complementarily, development policies should be encouraged to provide training, support and even cofinancing for innovative ICT projects at technology-based national enterprises. The instruments that could be used for this purpose are, among others: funds for technological innovation; tax incentives; technical assistance for improving software quality; government procurement policies; subsidies for training and postgraduate instruction in ICT and, in particular, content production and interactive digital services.

2. Second line of action: helping to close the digital divide between large and small enterprises

Despite the progress made, there is a significant gap in the use of ICT between large companies and smaller enterprises, particularly microenterprises and SMEs. If it persists, this gap could widen the productive heterogeneity of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The challenge here is not only to ensure that microenterprises and SMEs have access to ICT, but also that they develop advanced uses for such technologies, such as telework and e-commerce, thereby expanding their business opportunities, increasing their productivity and closing the technology gap.

This will require at least two complementary initiatives. The first involves public policies to create a favourable environment for achieving mass use of ICT among microenterprises and SMEs.

Telecommunications policy should aim to lower the cost of broadband access. E-government should increase the number of administrative formalities available online and open the government e-procurement system to participation by microenterprises and SMEs. The legal framework should facilitate implementation of e-billing and make e-business more secure. Anti-monopoly policy is equally important, and quality standards and certification should help make markets more transparent so that companies can purchase digital goods and services, reducing costs and the risk of capture and lock-in effects.

Second, development policies should aim to increase the capacity of microenterprises and SMEs to use more advanced ICT, including an Internet presence. The most important components of such policies include the training of professionals and workers, technical assistance to enable productive clusters and chains to use digital networks and services, credit support for purchasing ICT-intensive capital goods, and technical assistance for implementing systems with advanced ICT applications.

3. Priority: achieve access to ICT for all microenterprises and SMEs and promote digital innovation

Goal 13: Facilitate access by microenterprises and SMEs to the different digital technologies and achieve broadband access for most small firms.

Goal 14: Promote online access to the administrative formalities most frequently used by smaller firms, including government e-procurement systems in which microenterprises and SMEs participate.

Goal 15: Develop national and regional public policies on training and financing, among other areas, to help expand e-business and bring it within the reach of microenterprises and SMEs.

Goal 16: Promote large-scale national projects that incorporate ICT-based innovations and foster the development of national and regional enterprises.

Goal 17: Promote public policies and national and regional projects to research, innovate in and produce interactive, interoperable, accessible and user-friendly digital content, for different technological platforms and in different thematic areas. In addition, stimulate cultural and linguistic diversity, the storage and digitalization of analog content.

F. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

1. First line of action: crafting a legal environment that facilitates the development of the information society

The dissemination of ICT needs an appropriate legal environment that ensures the validity of digital signatures and e-documents and effective combating of cybercrime, especially offenses against privacy, content that promotes child pornography, racism or violence, and financial offences such as piracy, sabotage, the distribution of viruses, espionage, forgery and fraud.

The legal framework should ensure public sector transparency and the protection of personal data. Countries should have legislation for the digital world that strikes a balance between intellectual property rights and social requirements for the dissemination of knowledge and information.

2. Second line of action: moving towards the implementation of policies that facilitate the development of the information society

Internet governance must be multilateral, transparent, democratic and developed-oriented with Governments participating fully on an equal footing. It must also engage the private sector, civil society and international organizations. Net neutrality must be promoted, and discussions fostered at the relevant regional and subregional levels.

At the same time, efforts must be made to foster public policy and consolidate the national and regional legal framework to boost e-commerce and make it accessible to all individuals and businesses, especially microenterprises and SMEs.

3. Priority: promote the use of ICT for regional integration

Goal 18: Foster dialogue and cooperation in the area of regulation with a view to regional integration, in particular with respect to the protection of personal data, electronic signature and cybercrime.

Goal 19: Further dialogue and cooperation in order to promote e-billing at the regional level.

G. EDUCATION

1. Line of action: developing and implementing ICT for an inclusive education

Education, training and other forms of skills-building are basic tools for achieving development with equality, exercising citizenship and enriching the region's democracies. In this context, the countries of the region commit to enhancing plans and programmes for bringing ICT into education, training and other forms of learning, along with mechanisms for assessing their impact.

The priority is and will continue to be the lower-income segment of the population. This effort will be gender-mainstreamed and will respect cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as the needs of different sectors of our societies.

This effort must be sustained over different terms of government and thus requires a policy of State. The implementation of such a multifaceted policy calls for broadband access for educational establishments, the availability of computers and other digital media, advanced teacher training, content digitalization, interactive applications, technological innovation for education and new approaches to effective mainstream ICT into the teaching and learning process.

These policies must also actively engage students and their families, teachers and instructors, and content creators, editors and producers, as well as coordinators of ICT access points, interactive software developers, archivists and librarians.

2. Priority: provide universal access to ICT for education and expand their use

Goal 20: Support the effort to provide all educational establishments with broadband connections and substantially increase their computer density, while promoting the use of convergent educational resources such as mobile phones, video games and open interactive digital television. In this connection, foster public policies that support collaborative teaching and research activities carried out over national and regional research and education networks.

Goal 21: Ensure that all professors, teachers and management of educational institutions have received basic ICT training which enables them to incorporate these technologies effectively into the teaching-learning process. Here it is particularly important to train these professionals to maximize opportunities and minimize the risks associated with the use of different digital technologies by children and adolescents.

Goal 22: Encourage the development of interactive applications for education and promote the production of all public education content in digital form, based on the principles of accessibility, user-friendliness and availability over the Internet through computers and other digital devices. In this context, foster the exchange of teaching and technological innovations.

H. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE FOR A POLICY OF STATE

1. Line of action: establishing an entity for State coordination

The region has made substantial progress in promoting public policies for digital development and dissemination. But it faces four major challenges. First, digital technologies and networks are horizontal and encompass all sectors of the economy and society. This presents great opportunities but poses the challenge of overcoming the problems of coordination that States face in driving digital development. To this end, greater coordination is needed between public institutions and sectoral policies as well as between the different levels of government.

Second, it is time for a new stage in which ICT initiatives cease to be exogenous to public policy and are instead mainstreamed into sectoral strategies and policies.

Third, each country's digital plans or agendas must consider regional and subregional cooperation in order to ensure that ICT operate as instruments for integration and development.

The fourth challenge is to ensure that national agendas and sectoral plans incorporate statistical information and disaggregated measurements which enable evaluation of specific impacts on given population groups as well as measurements that support the formulation and monitoring of public policy.

II. FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM

Considering the experience with the two plans agreed previously, eLAC2015 will have a follow-up mechanism with three levels of coordination and cooperation:

A. FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE

It is agreed to hold an eLAC2015 ministerial follow-up conference in March 2013 in the city of ...... This conference is the highest body of the eLAC2015 follow-up process and will be responsible for assessing fulfilment of the aims and goals agreed upon at the third Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean and for making any adjustments and changes considered necessary.

B. PRESIDING OFFICERS

The Presiding Officers will constitute the executive organ of the eLAC2015 follow-up process and will be responsible for decision-making between ministerial conferences. The Presiding Officers will comprise two representatives from each of the four groups of countries listed below and will perform their duties until the next Ministerial Conference:

Region	Country	Country
Andean countries	Peru (Chair)	
Central America and Mexico		
Southern Cone		
The Caribbean		

The following will be invited to participate as observers:

(i) One representative designated by civil society organizations that are regional in scope.
(ii) One representative designated by private sector associations that are regional in scope.
(iii) One representative designated by the region's community of technical experts.

A commission on eLAC2015 indicators will be created jointly with the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC). The commission's participants and form of operation will be determined by the Presiding Officers.

C. FOCAL POINTS

Each country will appoint or ratify an entity as a national focal point. This focal point acts as liaison with the Presiding Officers and the technical secretariat (ECLAC). It will also be responsible for monitoring national participation in the working groups established by the third Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean and any other groups that may be formed in the future.

D. WORKING GROUPS

Building on the valuable experience with eLAC2007 and eLAC2010, the Conference agrees to retain the working group mechanism, with as broad a participation as possible and following the requirements set out below:

(a)   Composition of the working groups:

    (i)   Member countries will serve as Chairs and Vice Chairs.

    (ii)   Each country will nominate a national institution to participate in the working group and indicate the name of the person or persons who will represent this institution.

    (iii)   Each country will identify the entities, associations, non-governmental organizations and individual experts which will have the right to speak. The technical secretariat and other international agencies may put suggestions to the Chair of the working group.

    (iv)   International and regional agencies and regional civil society and private entities with some relation to the field will also be invited to participate with the right to speak.

(b)   Responsibilities of working group Chairs:

    (i)   To coordinate the working group and ensure that it meets its proposed objectives.

    (ii)   To coordinate the virtual platform which will be provided by the technical secretariat and create and maintain a minisite specifically for the working group, which will be used to disseminate content and information of interest.

    (iii)   To allocate an individual to coordinate the working group and maintain contact with the technical secretariat.

    (iv)   To propose, by January 2011, a plan of work for 2011-2013 with specific outputs. This plan will be submitted for the consideration of the full working group and of the Presiding Officers. The definitive version of the plan of work must be submitted for consideration and adopted by consensus of all the participating countries by 31 March 2011.

    (v)   Finance the creation and maintenance of the minisite mentioned in (b) (ii). National or international, public or private funding must be sought for all other activities (seminars, studies and other outputs).

(c)   Activities of the working groups

    (i)   To steer their work according to the lines of action and goals agreed upon for the Plan of Action eLAC2015.

    (ii)   Establish temporary, mission-based commissions or groups for the formulation of a specific output or action.

    (iii)   Propose new targets —especially in the area of regional integration— to be added to the Plan of Action subject to approval by the Presiding Officers.

       The Presiding Officers will be responsible for approving the creation of new working groups proposed by the countries or the discontinuation of existing working groups, based on consensus-seeking consultation with all the countries of the region.

       The third Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean agrees to create the following working groups:

Areas	Names of working groups
A. Access	Access and infrastructure
B. E-government	E-government and interoperability
C. Environment and ICT	
D. ICT and social security	
E. ICT and productive development and innovation	Innovation and appropriation of ICT by microenterprises and SMEs Digital contents Software and information technology services Telework
F. Enabling environment	Legal framework for the information society E-business Internet governance Gender Financing
G. Education	Digital development for education

E. TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

ECLAC will continue to provide technical support for the regional follow-up mechanism for eLAC2015 through studies, statistics and substantive information on the information society and associated public policies, the preparation of newsletters, the maintenance and expansion of the existing virtual collaborative forum and cooperation in the organization of technical meetings and the eLAC ministerial follow-up conference, which will be held in March 2013.

We request that ECLAC provide technical support to the Presiding Officers so that synergies may be sought with initiatives of international agencies that may contribute to achievement of the goals set out in eLAC2010. The Presiding Officers shall consult with the member States regarding any such initiatives.

ECLAC is requested to provide an accessible, user-friendly, collaborative platform, to function as a workplace for all the groups and the different components of the regional follow-up mechanism.