NEWSLETTER N°5

Presenting the new Regional Action Plan for 2008 - 2010

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eLAC 2010

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Renewed Regional Action Plan eLAC2010 features innovative changes

Outlining its 83 ambitious goals, list of partner agencies and changes to the Follow-Up Mechanism for the new Regional Action Plan eLAC2010, the main article offers an overview of this renewed agreement, approved in February during the II Ministerial Conference in San Salvador, El Salvador. It will be in force during the 2008-2010 period.

Governments weigh in on eLAC2010

Representatives of 14 of the governmental delegations to II Ministerial Conference in San Salvador offer their observations of progress made towards the information society in the region, as well as on the design of the new Regional Action Plan eLAC2010. They answer the following questions: What is the usefulness of regional cooperation and the contribution of eLAC2010? Which of the goals embodied in eLAC2010 are most important for your country?

UN DESA GAID seminar launches new regional network and proposes eLAC goals

More than 100 ICT-for-development experts from Latin America and the Caribbean analyzed how to take advantage of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for development, during the Launch Seminar for the Regional Network of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, held 4-5 February in San Salvador. Its four panels concluded with specific recommendations on the role of ICTs in poverty eradication, which were presented to delegates at the ensuing Ministerial Conference.

Private sector perspectives on the multi-stakeholder focus of eLAC2010

Page 8 features interviews with Telefonica and Hewlett Packard executives, regarding the goals of eLAC2010, as well as its nature as a 'metaplatform' to unite public and private sector efforts. On page 9, the Director of Marketing for Ericsson, who participated as a panelist during the GAID seminar in San Salvador, discusses the need for a multi-stakeholder approach in order to bridge the digital divide, encourage sustainable socio-economic development, and bring mobile and broadband communications to all.

Seeking gender parity in the construction of the region's information societies

Concentrating on the results of the virtual course "Science, Technology and Society: Contributions of the gender perspective" offered by the Regional UNESCO Chair, this article explores some initiatives for training and creating sensitive learning environments. Also mentioned is APC's Take Back the Tech campaign, which uses ICT to prevent violence against women, as well as the creation of a new Working Group on Gender, to include a cross-cutting gender perspective for the implementation of eLAC2010.

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Renewed Regional Action Plan eLAC2010 features innovative changes

Following three days of debate, with the participation of 27 countries, ministers and high-level Government representatives from the region, a renewed regional consensus was reached a the II Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in San Salvador, El Salvador, 6-8 February 2008.

It culminated in the signing of the San Salvador Commitment, which embodies the new *Regional Action Plan on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2010)*. With 83 specific and ambitious goals, an inventory of 88 agencies already working on these issues and able to help with their implementation, and a new follow-up mechanism with both a subregional and a thematic level of coordination, the new plan promises to be a more collaborative effort than the former plan, with even greater reach for the 2008-2010 period.

This renewed plan presents new challenges and deepens the commitments to many of the goals in the first design of this initiative, the Regional Action Plan eLAC2007, led by the countries of the region for the 2005-2007 period. This regional development strategy succeeded in guiding national policies, creating synergies, and eliminating the duplication of work among actors in various sectors working on issues related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Comparing the goals of eLAC2007 with those of eLAC2010

The dynamic speed of technological change requires the redefinition of such public policies every two to three years. It is interesting to note that only 20% of the goals in eLAC2010 are very similar to those in eLAC2007, while half of them have been adjusted to an ever-changing environment and around 30% of the goals are completely new on the agenda – many of which resulted from the *eLAC Policy Priorities Delphi*, which involved multi-stakeholder consultations with almost 1,500 participants between 2006 and 2007.

In fact, 50 of the 83 goals that ended up in the eLAC2010 plan emanate directly from the Delphi recommendations. Only 13 goals proposed in this vast online survey exercise were rejected by Governments. Meanwhile, governmental representatives elaborated 16 completely new goals and resuscitated 17 goals from the old eLAC2007 agenda, most of which were coherent with priority areas that had been identified by the second Delphi round. This reflects a great receptivity on the part of the region's decision-makers to the opinions and concerns of the multi-stakeholder community most involved in ICT issues.

Divided into six chapters, the new eLAC2010 will seek to maximize capabilities in, access to, and use of ICTs in the areas of: education and training; infrastructure and access; health; public administration and e-government; e-business and the productive sector; as well as policy and strategic tools. Moreover, it places special emphasis on the creation of synergies and support from entities and institutions working towards each goal.

Education: the top priority for 2010

The new eLAC2010 defined education as its primary challenge. Among the quantifiable goals in this issue, goal 1 seeks to develop school curricula that cover data, information and knowledge management and that strengthen teamwork, learning capacity, and problem-solving abilities.

The plan also sets measurable targets that are much more ambitious than those contained in eLAC2007 (*see table on page 5*). For example: goal 4 seeks to ensure that, by the time they complete school, 90% of students have used computers for educational purposes for at least 100 hours, or double the current number. This represents a noteworthy advance compared to goal 3 of eLAC2007, which only recommended "considerably increasing" the number of computers per student in education establishments.

In infrastructure and access, eLAC2010 includes goals such as: promoting the development of infrastructure in each country and in the region, fostering the deployment of traffic nodes, the installation of copies of root servers and local content hosting, with the object of improving the network's quality and stability and reducing access costs.

The use of ICTs in health has been identified as a lagging area which requires greater efforts in order to achieve the modernization of health services. As such, eLAC2010 places more emphasis on: the proper integration of ICTs into the health sector and the encouragement of public policies in this area (goal 29); and the task of linking national health portals with a view to establishing a regional network that can be used to share experiences (goal 35).

In public management, the goals seek to promote the interoperability of standards-based e-government systems in Latin America and the Caribbean (goal 38), and to ensure that 80% of local governments interact with citizens and other branches of the public administration via the Internet (goal 39).

In the chapter on the productive sector, goal 49 aims to facilitate access to the necessary resources and capacities for the introduction of ICTs into the production processes of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises.

The final chapter, on strategies and policy instruments, includes the most goals (23), which are mostly qualitative. These include: creating links among centres engaging in ICT research and development in order to increase investment in this field (goal 64); requesting that OSILAC continue monitoring activities as a means of identifying best practices (goal 68); and promoting the design of national strategies and regulation of technological waste management to deal with the environmental impact of such waste (goal 82).

To monitor the implementation of these goals, new Presiding Officers were chosen for the Regional Follow-up Mechanism for eLAC2010 during the Ministerial Conference. It will be presided over by El Salvador, with subregional representation from Argentina, Trinidad & Tobago, and Peru. This latter country will host the next ministerial conference in 2010, which will examine progress made towards the plan's goals.

The Regional Follow-up Mechanism will also include a second level of coordination, by theme, for each of the chapters of the eLAC platform. It will be integrated by: Cuba (on education), Costa Rica (infrastructure and access), Mexico (health), Peru (public administration), Uruguay (production sectors), and Bolivia (policy and strategy tools).

Another important innovation is that representatives of the private sector and civil society have been invited to participate in the Mechanism, as observers. These sectors are expected to communicate their wishes to take advantage of this space in writing to the Presidency and to ECLAC.

"In creating a structure that is more flexible when compared with the previous model of eLAC, it will be easier to develop initiatives around the goals embodied in eLAC," says Erick Iriarte, director of the NGO Alfa-Redi, and member of Peru's official delegation in San Salvador. "At the same time, it will allow for easier and more dynamic action from international cooperation agencies, United Nations organisms, and organizations from civil society and the private sector, who couldn't find a specific goal on which to act, but who clearly had areas of action in which they could contribute."

The delegates in San Salvador also asked for ECLAC's continued technical support to the Follow-up Mechanism, by means of studies, statistics and substantive information on the information society and related public policies; the production of newsletters; the maintenance and expansion of a virtual collaborative space; and the organization of technical meetings and a conference to evaluate eLAC2010.

Multiple actors will ensure eLAC's implementation

According to the conclusions of the *Monitoring eLAC2007* report, prepared by the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC), action-oriented activities show more progress when a specific mechanism is used, and/or when there are clearly recognizable contributing partners. This is even more effective when specialized agencies or networks active in the area specify how actions will be carried out and offer their support, through financial or other resources, contacts and institutional structure.

As a result, eLAC2010 was redesigned so as to clearly identify the various organizations that are actively involved in each area. Annex 2 of the San Salvador Commitment includes a list of 88 agencies that are active in the areas related to eLAC's specific goals. Most of these goals are indexed to a list of various organizations that could assist in their implementation. However, some objectives are more associated with a particular agency that is working on this subject.

For example, the Latin American Network of Educational Portals (RELPE) is connected to goal 7, which seeks to ensure that 100% of national education portals meet the eligibility requirements for full membership in such portals' regional networks by 2010.

The Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks (CLARA) and C@ribNET are named under goal 19, which aims to connect 80% of research and educational centres, to advanced data communications networks for research and education, as well as under goal 20, which

focuses on the development of advanced networks in the Caribbean for education and research within the framework of C@ribNET, in coordination with CLARA.

The Regional Dialogue on the Information Society (DIRSI), a network of professionals that seeks financing, new models of universal service and regulation for the poor, fits naturally under goal 22, which promotes the creation of specially-priced baskets of appropriate-content digital services for socially vulnerable sectors.

For several years now, the Latin American Telecommunications Regulators Forum (REGULATEL) has been reviewing the functionality, design and purpose of universal ICT access funds, making it the natural body to implement goal 23, which has these same objectives.

In addition, the functions of the Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean (RedGealc) are essentially the same as goal 37 – to strengthen means of exchanging e-government services, developing regional cooperation for the exchange or transfer of technologies, platforms, applications and software and the corresponding knowledge, skills and best practices – and RedGealc has a long and proven track-record in this area.

During the inauguration of the Ministerial Conference, ECLAC's Executive Secretary, José Luis Machinea, praised the eLAC process as "the principal collaborative effort for ICT policies in the region. It is a policy agenda adopted regionally which aims to facilitate the incorporation of ICT through cooperation and the exchange of best practices."

The result is a 'metaplatform' for public-private coordination, defined in the San Salvador Commitment as: "a platform that promotes regional integration and cooperation in the area of information and communications technologies and that acts as a link between goals at the international level and the needs and priorities of the Latin American and Caribbean region and its countries."

New Working Groups

Another level of follow-up has been undertaken by Working Groups, which prepared studies and coordinated organisms that work on a given issue. The eLAC2010 Action Plan recommended renewing the mandate of the majority of the eLAC2007 working groups, specifically those on infrastructure, creative industries, telework, financing, Internet Governance, software, and legislative and legal frameworks. It also solicited the creation of four new groups on: e-health, ICTs and disability, technological waste, and gender.

Gloria Bonder, director of the Regional UNESCO Workshop on Women, Science and Technology, applauds the decision to include gender as "an omnipresent factor" in eLAC. "It's not just included as an additional goal," explains Bonder, "but as a genuine and transversal perspective for the platform, capable of providing specific orientation to the objectives and actions of working groups."

It is worth noting that how these Working Groups will be composed remains to be determined, given that the Regional Follow-up Mechanism has yet to register their coordinators and members. In the spirit of a metaplatform for public-private coordination, participants in all groups will need to seek out partners and donors in public and private organizations that are working in the relevant area.

See the specific goals of eLAC2010: http://www.elac2007.org.sv/en/doc.php

Table with eLAC2010's quantifiable goals

Education
- Connect 70% of public educational institutions to the Internet, preferably via broadband connections, or triple the current number.
- Ensure that, by the time they complete school, 90% of students have used computers for educational purposes for at least 100 hours, or double the current number. Such use requires appropriate training according to the type and level of education and should contribute to students' job skills.
- Train 70% of teachers in the use of ICTs or triple the current number.
- Train 70% of teachers and civil servants in the education sector in the use of ICTs for the development of school curricula, or triple the current number.
- Ensure that all national education portals meet the eligibility requirements for full membership in such portals' regional networks.

Infrastructure and access
- Provide coverage for 70% of the population in urban areas with a reliable, preferably highcapacity, network, or double existing coverage.
- Provide coverage for 60% of the population in rural areas with a reliable, preferably highcapacity, network, or double existing coverage.
- Increase the number of ICT access centres serving the community, including libraries and other facilities, in order to halve the average ratio of potential users per centre, or achieve a ratio of 1,750 people per centre, regardless of whether it is public or private.
- Connect 80% of research and educational centres, particularly centres of higher education, to advanced data communications networks for research and education, such as RedCLARA and C@ribNET, or triple the current number.
- Review the functionality, design and purpose of universal ICT access funds, and execute at least 80% of those funds.

Health
- Establish electronic health services, including Internet-based services, in 70% of public health centres and 80% of public hospitals or double the current number.
- Train 80% of public health professionals in the use of ICTs or double the current number.
- Ensure that 70% of health centres and hospitals work with process-planning and management software or applications, ensuring their interoperability, or double the current number.
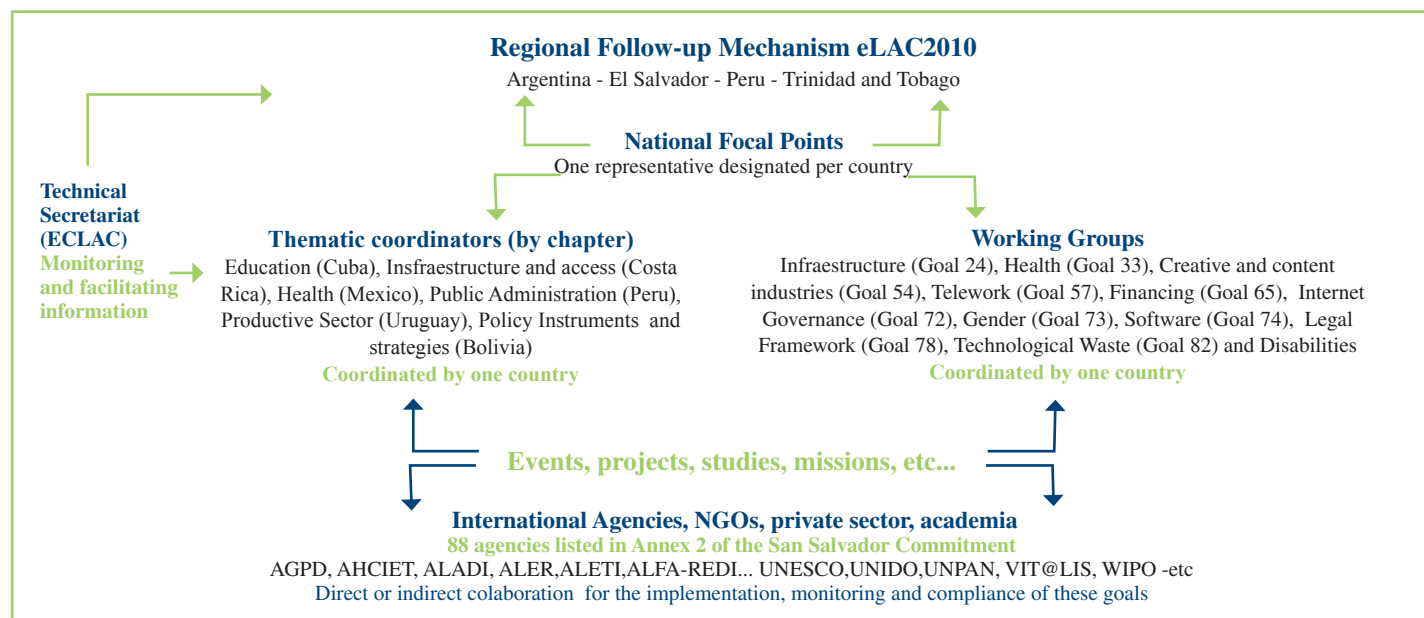
Public management
- Ensure that 80% of local Governments interact with citizens and other branches of the public administration via the Internet, or double the current number.
- Ensure that 70% of national and local public entities are connected using the "one-stop window" approach for citizen transactions, or double the current number, as appropriate.
- Train 80% of civil servants, particularly decision-makers, in national, regional and local Governments in the use of ICTs, in line with their levels, in such a way as to have a positive impact on their performance of their functions, or triple the current number.
- Ensure that 50% of the entities making up the public administration post relevant, useful and timely information on their portals, including information about decisionmaking processes, in order to facilitate the Government's relationship with citizens and other stakeholders, or double the current number.

Policy instruments and strategies
- Invite countries that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations to consider the possibility of ratifying or acceding to that convention.

New eLAC architecture

Regional Follow-up Mechanism eLAC2010
Argentina - El Salvador - Peru - Trinidad and Tobago

National Focal Points
One representative designated per country

Technical Secretariat (ECLAC)
Monitoring and facilitating information

Thematic coordinators (by chapter)
Education (Cuba), Insfraestructure and access (Costa Rica), Health (Mexico), Public Administration (Peru), Productive Sector (Uruguay), Policy Instruments and strategies (Bolivia)
Coordinated by one country

Working Groups
Infraestructure (Goal 24), Health (Goal 33), Creative and content industries (Goal 54), Telework (Goal 57), Financing (Goal 65), Internet Governance (Goal 72), Gender (Goal 73), Software (Goal 74), Legal Framework (Goal 78), Technological Waste (Goal 82) and Disabilities
Coordinated by one country

Events, projects, studies, missions, etc...

International Agencies, NGOs, private sector, academia
88 agencies listed in Annex 2 of the San Salvador Commitment
AGPD, AHCIET, ALADI, ALER,ALETI,ALFA-REDI... UNESCO,UNIDO,UNPAN, VIT@LIS, WIPO -etc
Direct or indirect colaboration for the implementation, monitoring and compliance of these goals

UN DESA GAID seminar launches new regional network and proposes new eLAC goals

More than 100 ICT-for-development experts from Latin America and the Caribbean analyzed how to take advantage of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for development, during the Launch Seminar for the Regional Network of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, held 4-5 February in San Salvador, El Salvador.

Just days before the II Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, the meeting created a connection between both events, particularly in its elaboration of proposals on the role of these new technologies in health, education, youth employment, and e-government. Its four panels concluded with specific recommendations on the role of ICTs in poverty eradication, which were presented to delegates at the Ministerial Conference, where the new Regional Action Plan (eLAC2010) was signed.

The first panel in the GAID seminar, "National ICT Policies and Strategies for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)," recommended the coordination of telecommunications policies (i.e. regulation, universal access) with social policies, so as to dedicate existing subsidies to sectors beyond infrastructure. In education, proposals included the creation of more appropriate cognitive elements geared towards the new requirements of the labour market.

Experts also suggested: developing content and applications in mobile telephony (where there is more equity in access); channeling universal access funds towards infrastructure and capacity-building; and developing new minimum access service baskets, and improved monitoring of ICT progress, with measurements of network coverage, access, and spending.

The main conclusions of the panel "Technology for the Poor: ICT Innovation for Poverty Eradication," focused on changes with meaningful impacts on education. These include: providing content, introducing performance standards for students and educators; expanding educational websites to incorporate ICT; developing policies and monitoring systems for new models of learning. These policies must encourage learning and the introduction of technology with a view to creating an active and integral citizenry; that is to say, using ICTs as a voice for the community, particularly for its poorest members.

According to panelist Elena García, from the Latin American Network of Educational Portals (RELPE): "Investments focused on access, computers and applications have demonstrated their ineffectiveness as elements of change. The lack of grounding in a development perspective fails to stimulate the kind of social transformation the region requires." To overcome that, García says a profound change in educational policies and practices is necessary.

The need to move towards greater interoperability in the region, so as to take advantage of economies of scale was discussed in the panel "How to Develop e-Government Applications in order to Enhance Citizens' Participation and Promote Accountability, Transparency and Efficiency." It emphasized the need to involve local governments in national strategies, recalling the central role of municipalities, given that they are closer to their citizens.

Along with two panelists from the Governments of Colombia and Brazil, ECLAC expert and moderator Hernán Moreno, presented a concrete project that implemented a one-stop portal for international trade between both countries.

The last panel, "Multi-stakeholder Frameworks for Developing Effective Policies and Partnerships for Mainstreaming ICT," concluded that, to optimize alliances, more support is needed for private-sector innovation. This should allow the development of technologies and solutions to diminish poverty and demonstrate social responsibility.

According to panelist Matías Rodríguez (AHCIET), the response to failures of the market is neither intervention, nor nationalization, nor capitalizations, if not the creation of alliances that can generate new solutions with concrete agendas.

The seminar, organized by ECLAC, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, of the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN DESA GAID), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and Canada's International Development Research Centre - Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (IDRC-ICA), also featured the launch of a new Latin American and Caribbean Regional Network.

The initiative will seek to ensure that United Nations efforts to bridge the digital divide in the region are more inclusive and reflect efforts already underway by regional and international institutions. The UN DESA GAID Network will organize regional forums on ICT-for-Development, and promote innovation and collaboration on strategies, human capacities, content, applications and infrastructure.

During his virtual intervention in the seminar, the Executive Coordinator of UN DESA GAID, Sarbuland Khan, clarified that the network will provide a space for cooperation that will not duplicate efforts, but reflect at a global level the existing initiatives of local institutions. In the region, the network will be guided by the priorities identified in the Regional Action Plan eLAC2010.

The Global Alliance was launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2006 to contribute to transforming the spirit and vision of the World Summit on the Information Society into action and promoting the use of ICTs for the achievement of internationally concerted goals, including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

To hear English podcasts of the seminar's four panels, visit: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-119610-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html 🌐

Governments weigh in

What is the usefulness of regional cooperation and the contribution of eLAC2010 in this field?

Argentina - Raul Déjean
Presiding Officer of the Regional Follow-up Mechanism,
Director of the Special Group on Technology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The "San Salvador Commitment" and its eLAC2010 Regional Action Plan, which will guide our proceedings until the next Ministerial Conference in Lima, provide a concerted compendium of all the actions needed in order to turn our profound aspirations of achieving a more just and unity society into reality.

Surely all of the actors involved will be able to congratulate ourselves at the end of the next three years, by proving that the generalized awareness and the efforts achieved have shown results, contributing to improved and more dignified lives for our people and a brighter future for our region within the concert of Nations.

Chile - Luz María García
Advisor to the Directorate of Energy, Science,
Technology and Innovation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The eLAC2010 Action Plan presents new challenges that will allow us to advance in a more balanced and consensual way that reflects the realities of our countries, by means of precise goals that can be monitored, verified and quantified, which gives our countries great confidence.

Chile recognizes that progress on these issues cannot be achieved in a closed manner or without regional dialogue, given that international networks are currently advancing more rapidly than Governments and the actions they are undertaking. As a result, the road ahead involves sharing with the region the progress our country has made in developing our digital strategy and in generating a permanent dialogue on these issues, both of which contribute to the goals of eLAC2010.

Cuba - Boris A. Moreno Cordovés
Deputy Minister of Information Technology and Communications

How relevant can ICT be for education without an educational system that reaches everyone and begins by eradicating illiteracy? What can the digitalization of health contribute to the millions of people who do not receive medical care? Given these realities, it is indispensable to create ICT-for-development models that take the particularities of our countries into account. Profound structural transformations are underway and a system of relationships is being developed, based on solidarity and principles that seek to achieve the very kind of integrated development that is required for our continued existence as just and sovereign nations. eLAC2010 represents a serious and ambitious challenge which our Governments must take on with drive and commitment.

Ecuador - Jaime Guerrero Ruiz
President, National Council for Telecommunications (CONATEL)

Ecuador has participated optimistically in the eLAC process, convinced that regional cooperation is vital to making an information and knowledge society a reality. This requires permanent support for the development of the communities of our region and the world, and for the sustained reduction of both the internal and external digital divide in the region.

CONATEL is in charge of implementing, evaluating and continuously updating the National Agenda for Connectivity, which has as its main focus: e-Education, e-Health, e-Commerce and e-Government, under the overarching axis of Infrastructure for Access. These are seen as means to fulfill national objectives geared towards development and strengthening the information society – the very goals and objectives identified within the eLAC process.

Paraguay - Osvaldo Ayala
Head of the ICT Development Department, National
Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL)

Cooperation between countries is fundamental, as it allows us to confront the same problems and establish joint ICT-related policies. Paraguay is undertaking efforts to ensure our compliance with the Millennium Development Goals. We are committed to the construction of an Information Society that allows us to integrate ourselves into the international community in various ways, in an environment of sustainable development and equality. We are convinced that by reducing the digital divide, Paraguayan society will be able to reap the benefits of ICT, in an integral and egalitarian manner. It is important to stress that awareness of the benefits of ICT must be ingrained at the highest political level so that the synergies of this process can have continuity.

Peru - Cayetana Aljovin
Deputy Minister of Communications

The renewal of the eLAC platform allows for an improved definition of priorities and the establishment of better-defined goals that are more in line with the realities of our countries. It has also resulted in a strengthened Follow-up Mechanism and shared responsibilities. This allows us to appreciate that what began as an effort to integrate regional policies in issues related to the Information Society has matured and turned into a space for collaboration and integration for the efforts of diverse social actors focused on the use of ICTs in the development processes of our countries and our region. It is our duty to ensure that these goals are met by the next eLAC Conference, in 2010, in Peru.

Dominican Republic - José Rafael Vargas
President of the Dominican Institute for Telecommunications

We expect to see a greater appropriation of this new plan from all sectors at a national and regional level, within the framework of their respective digital agendas, as well as in their sectoral and development plans. We praise the open and participative process followed for the definition of this plan, particularly considering the participation of non-governmental actors from the private sector and NGOs specializing in ICT, as well as the use of innovative consultation instruments. We welcome the integral and holistic vision of this new plan with respect to the actions required so that various sectors of our societies can progress with integrated political agendas. We also recognize the centrality of the final protagonists of these strategies, while committing ourselves to the development of a digital agenda with gender parity.

Which of the goals embodied in eLAC2010 are most important for your country?

Brazil - Rogério Vianna
Secretariat for ICT Policy, Ministry of Science and Technology

Brazil sees various eLAC issues as priorities: shared infrastructure for scientific development (such as CLARA); increased access to broadband; improvements in the e-Government services offered to our societies, in particular in health, education and public contracting; the massive use of digital certificates and the dissemination of e-business, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises, are just a few.

Moreover, Brazil has proposed an additional programme to promote the shared production of digital content between our countries. Brazil is always open to sharing experiences and technologies with the other countries in our region, to assist in the development of the information society, and as an important step towards achieving a harmonious and pacific coexistence among our people in these changing times.

Colombia - Daniel Medina
Deputy Minister of Communications

It is important to highlight those goals directly related to community programmes aimed at the less-fortunate members of our region, who need more assistance by nature, from both the Government and the private sector. In this sense, the commitments that must be met by 2010 in education, not only through access-oriented programmes if not those aimed at the appropriation of ICTs, are vital for the development of our society. The establishment of distance health programmes that aim to reach the most distant zones of our geography, providing health services and training our health professionals in the use of ICTs, are a pressing priority. These goals cannot be reached without the appropriate infrastructure and a public administration that promotes the inclusion of ICT in our nations.

Costa Rica - Alicia Avendaño Rivera
Director of Digital Government

One of the most relevant aspects of this Action Plan is its identification of 88 public and private agencies that are committed to the implementation of these national and regional goals. Having approved the plan, Costa Rica has the best disposition to participate actively in the execution of eLAC2010, and we would like to identify the following issues as priorities therein: promoting national and regional interoperability for the implementation of treaties and agreements; developing and promoting a training strategy to satisfy the demand for human resources in ICT; maximizing the use of technology in various sectors, including SMEs and local Governments; and defining academic and technical performance standards, given that without such standards, the process of universalizing access cannot be achieved.

Guatemala - Aldo Bonilla
International affairs coordinator,
Superintendency of Telecommunications

We see the education-related goals as particularly important, given that Guatemala has adopted a National Agenda for the Information Society that centralizes all those programmes under the fundamental axes of development, such as: Education, Infrastructure, Health, e-Government, etc. Following a four-year effort, two of our programmes have turned out to be particularly successful: one that provides 60% of our public school teachers with a computer and the Technology for Education programme,

which refurbishes used computers for schools.

We would equally like to express our concern that other institutions are developing similar initiatives, which represent a duplication of efforts. We would like to call on all those institutions united under the eLAC2010 umbrella to coordinate their efforts so as to achieve a more integrated Information Society for a united and cooperative Latin America.

Mexico - Alejandro Hernández
Coordinator of the National e-Mexico System,
Communications and Transportation Secretariat

The issues of greatest importance to Mexico are:

1. Promoting capabilities that allow the region to participate in great global development and investigation processes. Direct and decided action of Governments is fundamental for developing high-capacity national networks for education and investigation based on their own assets and optical technologies.

2. Advancing with Internet coverage, particularly broadband, as well as in programmes geared towards inclusion and digital participation through the generation of local conditions that allow the appropriation of these technologies.

3. Supporting key industries that positively impact various productive sectors, such as the IT industry, which should act as an important motor for the creation and growth of new jobs.

4. In health, electronic clinical records are an important achievement which requires the adaptation of legal and normative frameworks.

Trinidad & Tobago - Kennedy Swaratsingh
Minister of Public Administration

We recognize the importance and inter-dependence of all the goals in eLAC2010. Notwithstanding, some reflect our more immediate priorities:
• All of the objectives under chapter 1 outline a holistic framework for the increased use of ICTs in education;
• On infrastructure and access, connecting community-based, research and educational networks (goal 12, 19), and strengthening regional platforms for electronic disaster management (goals 26, 28);
• In the health sector, promoting the proper integration of ICTs (goal 29);
• In public management, we are centralizing government services at 'one-stop, non-stop shop' portals like www.ttconnect.gov.tt (goals 45, 46)
• Goals 49, 50 and 52 facilitate use of ICTs in the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise sector; while goal 55 promotes the development of nationally accredited instructional curricula for employment-oriented ICT training;
• Finally, we prioritize indicators enabling effective monitoring and evaluation of development projects (goal 67).

Uruguay - José Clastornik
Executive Director, Agency for the Governmental
Development of Electronic Management (AGESIC)

Uruguay committed itself to some elements that were absent in the initial drafts of eLAC2010, in particular to the production of contents and the use of ICT in productive sectors. We also proposed that the monitoring work of the Follow-Up Mechanism for eLAC be undertaken along thematic areas, which were represented by different countries. This idea was revisited and approved during the Ministerial Conference, which to our understanding constitutes an important step for organizing the joint efforts that we must now undertake. In short, the work thus far has been very productive, and while the challenges are important, if we can achieve them this will undoubtedly contribute to the development of our societies.

Voices from the private sector

Interview with Javier Nadal,

Executive Vice-president of the Telefonica Foundation

What are the challenges for incorporating ICT issues in the region's public policies?
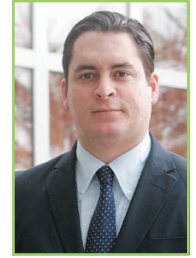
We face three challenges in our task, in which certain agents play a vital role. The first involves sharing information, coordinating efforts, forging synergies and monitoring best practices. The second challenge relates to following-up these goals in the regional context of greater goals for Latin America, to convert them into actions that can yield benefits for the citizens of each country, state, province, or municipality. The third is how to promote ICT as a public policy priority in the political agendas of each country.

How can we consolidate public and private efforts to elaborate policies that favour growth with equity?

The results of the Ministerial Conference in El Salvador are already proof that public-private alliances work. We are proud to have contributed to the concretion of eLAC2010. Nevertheless, we must move forward so that the measures agreed upon in eLAC2010 are reflected in the policies of each country. To assist in the consolidation of these public/private efforts, it is worth forging a pact of dual responsibility; on the one hand, the responsibility of the public sector to offer a stable legal and regulatory framework that promotes investment and private entrepreneurship, and facilitates the growth of infrastructure and technological appropriation. On the other hand, the responsibility of the private sector must include a commitment to long-term investments, permanence, and Corporate Social Responsibility around the company and its clientele.

Which ICT-for-development projects do you have planned for the region during eLAC2010?

Telefonica Group has a great commitment to Latin America, not only as a result of its great infrastructure investments to date, but given its new investments worth more than 14 billion euros, for the eLAC2010 period. In addition, we will continue to develop programmes to reduce educational disparities, such as *Proniño*, which helps fight child labour by keeping more than 50,000 children in school today. In a similar vein, our *Educared* programme offers an educational website that promotes the use of ICTs in primary and secondary school education, for the benefit of teachers, students, parents and educational centers. Moreover, the *Forum* programme, which contributes to the analysis and promotion of ICT applications in different aspects of social and economic life, helps Telefonica fulfill its vocation as a strategic ally for the development, competitiveness and progress of those countries in which it is active 🌎

Interview with Edgardo Torres-Caballero,

Government Affairs / Public Sector Advocacy Latin America & Caribbean, Hewlett-Packard Company

Do you believe that the new eLAC2010 reflects a maturation of the region's information societies?

Certainly the incursion of eLAC in Latin America gives us an edge over the rest of the world's nations that have already made progress, by integrating our region in this important network for collaboration and discussion of essential issues related to innovation and technology. The development of digital agendas exists at different levels in the governments of the region: some countries, such as Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Jamaica have made significant progress; while others such as Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador are falling behind. eLAC represents a fundamental contribution to resolving this divide, by sharing best practices, success stories and processes that have led more advanced countries, such as Chile, to be agents of change in this context. In this way, eLAC's integral approach can spur the region to be a global leader.

How can we consolidate public and private efforts to elaborate policies that favour growth with equity?

We have welcomed a model for public-private collaboration which we believe amplifies the potential of resources, experiences and processes that allow for greater efficiency and returns on investments of time and money on different initiatives. Without a doubt, one of these areas involves the definition, structure and execution of e-government projects or digital agendas in Latin America. HP's vast geographic coverage – in more than 170 countries of the world – and its more than 60 years of experience working with the public sector, provide for a unique and active collaboration with the private sector. Our company is working with case studies of successful projects so as to replicate them in various geographical areas, while respecting the local culture and idiosyncrasies of each country. This model achieves economies of scale and faster technological adoption processes, which translate into tangible benefits for the country and the socio-economic development of its population. Moreover, the use of business models that allow Governments flexibility of investment for their technological assets, serves as a tool within the process of establishing their respective public policies. Service subcontracting models, public-private corporations, and others, are examples of such alternatives that seek to stimulate growth, improve efficiency and elevate the level of service and returns on investments.

How will the identification of 88 agencies working in relation with specific goals contribute to the implementation of eLAC2010?

The participation of entities from various sectors under the eLAC agenda is fundamental to achieving adequate integration and regional coordination. The key for the future is to define their appropriate roles and responsibilities, in such a way that the stage of executing initiatives can be achieved 🌎

Achieving "Communication for All" in Latin America requires a multi-stakeholder approach

Johan Haeger, Marketing Director, Ericsson

Mr. Haeger participated in the panel "Multi-stakeholder frameworks for developing effective policies and partnerships for mainstreaming ICT," during the UN DESA GAID launch seminar for the Latin America and Caribbean Network, in El Salvador.

Although there are 3.3 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide and 1.9 million new subscribers every day, many still do not have access to mobile communications. Ericsson's vision of "communication for all" aims to address exactly this, through innovation, technology and sustainable business solutions.

Mobile communications are suited to life in places such as Latin America and the Caribbean, where information and communications technology (ICT) is scarce. They are relatively cheap and easy to use, do not need a regular power supply and are not exclusive to those with technological experience.

Empowerment through multi-stakeholder partnerships

To drive sustainable socio-economic development, a multi-stakeholder approach must be considered. Governments play an important role in such partnerships by facilitating the growth of broadband; diminishing taxation and developing policies that stimulate investment; and providing subsidies to increase ICT usage. In many emerging markets, there is a lack of local resources with the ability to roll out and operate a network. It is therefore important for Governments to focus on building that local competence, for example through educating university teachers and students.

Governments must work towards liberalizing the telecom market and stimulating investment. This increases competition, which in turn improves service and reduces costs for consumers. In addition, they will need to work towards a globally harmonized spectrum, ensuring roaming and economies of scale in network equipment, devices and services.

Telecom operators must realize the full potential of low-income users. They represent a segment that will give profitable revenues if the appropriate business models and technology are used.

Additional stakeholders include local and national development organizations. They can train people in the use of equipment and develop locally relevant information, among other things. Only through local implementation and ownership can projects become sustainable in the long-run.

This multi-stakeholder approach will help the region overcome the digital divide (caused by poor infrastructure, low competence levels, high call tariffs, regulation and taxation, subscription costs and so on), and promote new technologies.

Making communications accessible in Peru

Peru is a geographically diverse country, with a low level of mobile penetration. Only 36.1 percent of people have access to mobile communications. The situation is worse in rural and isolated areas, and no commercial strategy has successfully responded to the demands of this sector.

Ericsson has addressed this with a telecoms business project for high-altitude rural areas. The project, which began in late 2007, aims to create business models supported by multiple stakeholders that are based on the active participation and ownership of the local community.

The project will establish small businesses that will commercialize mobile telephony and Internet access. This responds to the demand for privacy and the ability to talk anytime, anywhere in these rural areas. By allowing the application of core technology to connect isolated populations, this project will also demonstrate that mobile connectivity can stimulate local business development and improve people's quality of life.

The project is designed to be scalable and replicable both in Peru and the rest of the region. For this reason, Ericsson is working alongside other stakeholders, such as multilateral development agencies and the Institute for Peruvian Studies.

Ericsson's core business– an enabler for eLAC2010

The goals agreed under eLAC2010 seek to contribute to the construction of an inclusive and development-oriented information society. They are in line with Ericsson's core business to provide broadband everywhere and "communication for all". In Ericsson's view, the way to achieve this is through the advancement of technologies aligned to the 3GPP family of standards – GSM, EDGE, WCDMA/HSPA – that offer the highest advantages for emerging markets in terms of economies of scale, technology, and spectrum efficiency.

This will be especially important for the continued growth of broadband in the region, where solutions will help improve the geographical coverage and support new business models appropriate for rural areas, often with low-spending users.

To ensure the plan's success, an active partnership from Government organizations, regulators and the public sector must be promoted. Government and local organizations should not limit themselves to policies and regulations, but rather recognize that they play a key role in the development of infrastructure that will provide ICT facilities for the education and health sectors, among others.

For further information, visit: http://www.ericsson.com/technology/whitepapers/Can_mobile_communications_close_Digital%20Divide.pdf

Seeking gender parity in the construction of the region's information societies

In 2004, María del Pilar Angarita had just started teaching in the Industrial Engineering Faculty of the Central University of Bogota, when she noticed that her students weren't participating equally.

"There was more participation from men in some course activities, such as email communication, while women would seek me out in the professors lounge when they wanted to communicated with me," explains the young educator. "As a professor, I wanted to find a common approach."

She also wanted to take advantage of new information and communications technologies (ICTs) to "stay ahead as an educator and not fear technological changes."

So Angarita signed up for an online course offered by the Regional UNESCO Chair for Women, Science and Technology in Latin America (Catunesco). The course, "Science, Technology and Society: Contributions of the gender perspective," teaches concepts and pedagogical strategies for creating learning environments sensitive to the needs and interests of men and women. It provides an understanding of scientific and technological development from a gender perspective.

Since 2004, more than 150 educators and professionals from 13 Ibero-American countries have participated in this course. Most work in intermediate and higher learning institutions, teacher training institutes, universities, NGOs, governmental organizations and cooperation agencies.

"It was a God-send for me," recalls Angarita. "I discovered that we could share knowledge and create networks among students; plus, it was easier to generate a more open discussion in a virtual environment." With the help of some fellow professors, in mid-2005, she launched a tool for uniting interest groups in virtual environments. The initiative, which lasted a year, managed to create networks and change attitudes both within the classroom as well as in her professional life.

According to Catunesco, the success of their training course can be gauged with examples like this one, which result in tangible projects in schools, communities or organizations. Other examples include one in Mendoza, Argentina, where a philosophy professor did an educational simulation of the Human Genome Project to discuss a relevant public controversy. In Montevideo, Uruguay, a student of the University of the Republic prepared a study on the leadership and participation of students in cooperative learning environments supported by electronic fora. And in Caracas, the teaching coordinator for the Women's Studies Center of the Central University of Venezuela organized a women's club for science and technology issues.

The Catunesco course fulfills goal 1 of the eLAC2010 plan, which seeks to "develop school curricula that cover data, information and knowledge management and that strengthen teamwork, learning capacity, and problem-solving abilities."

According to Gloria Bonder, director of Catunesco, a gender approach is necessary because although the gap is closing in terms of access to ICT, there are differences in terms of their use and women's access to power circles: "The biggest problem is that men and women are not participating equally in the design of technology, in the creation of content, and in the formulation of public policies for information societies."

Various agencies are working towards the inclusion of a gender perspective in ICT issues in the region. Among the most active is the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), which initiated the campaign "*Take Back the Tech,*" which uses ICTs to prevent violence against women.

"Some studies have shown that ICTs can be used to perpetrate violence against women," explains Daphne Plou, regional coordinator for Latin America of APC's Women's Networks Support Programme. "But with campaigns like this one, we can counteract that, by controlling technology."

Launched in English in November 2006 and adapted in Spanish in 2007, the campaign incites women to take part in 16 days of activism, to contribute their knowledge on women's rights issues and to add a gender perspective to websites like Wikipedia. The campaign site http://www.takebackthetech.net/actions suggests examining webpages on violence against women and adding information about one's own country (which is possible on Wikipedia). For this, women across the world used and experimented with tools such as blogs, podcasts and virtual postcards.

This initiative fulfills goal 10 of the eLAC2010 plan: to "disseminate experiences with the use of virtual reality tools as ICT applications in educational curricula designed to foster cultural diversity and tolerance and to combat discrimination on the basis of, inter alia, race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, illness and/or disability."

Gender issues also received an important impetus during the II Ministerial Conference, with the agreement to create a new Working Group on Gender, to develop ICT initiatives at national and regional levels that include a cross-cutting gender perspective for the implementation of eLAC2010.

Bonder, who is part of the multidisciplinary team behind this new Working Group, characterizes its creation as an important achievement for gender parity in the construction and expansion of the information society. Her team is part of the Steering Committee of the International Taskforce on Women and ICT, of the UN DESA GAID.

Another of its leaders, Amparo Arango, of the Dominican Republic's National Commission for the Information and Knowledge Society (CNSIC), hopes the new working group will help ministries, networks and women's NGOs to dominate new technologies and use them, especially in the productive sector and for generating revenue 🌎

ICT News Briefs

Commonwealth helping with national ICT policies in the Caribbean

The *Commonwealth Connects* programme of the British Commonwealth Secretariat, launched in 2005 to provide expertise and assistance to member countries with limited ICT capacity, has recently begun several projects in the Caribbean.

In June 2007, the *Computers for Communities* project was launched as a regional initiative to refurbish used computers and peripherals donated by all Caribbean governments and corporate citizens, and create a national and sustainable system for collecting, upgrading, repairing and replacing computers for use in schools and at-risk communities in Trinidad and Tobago. In Belize, *Commonwealth Connects* assisted the Government with the formulation and implementation of an ICT Strategy within its National Development Plan, in February 2007. In Jamaica, it is providing a training workshop for small-scale organic female farm entrepreneurs within the *Knowing and Growing Network*. And most recently, from 3-4 December 2007 in Barbados, the programme offered the Commonwealth Connects Champions Regional Workshop on e-Business and e-Government.

For the 2008-2009 period, the programme plans to: evaluate the current state of e-readiness for Commonwealth Caribbean Countries; provide assistance to countries for their National ICT Strategic Plans; help with ICT Governance Disaster recovery and Contingency Planning; leverage technology utilized in other Commonwealth Countries; execute distance education; and promote strategies to exploit the diaspora. *Commonwealth Connects* has seed funding and is looking to work with other donors active in the region to finance these projects.

For more information: www.commonwealthconnects.net

INTEL to distribute 50,000 computers in Bolivia

With the donation of 50 computers to school children in the Bolivian municipality of Tiwanaku, one of four projects of the Intel World Ahead programme was launched in March. It aims to integrate technology in education and promote the development of public and private services to improve productivity, efficiency and transparency.

According to Sergio Valle, Executive Director of the Bolivian Agency for the Development of the Information Society (ADSIB), the Memorandum of Understanding with INTEL is geared towards progress in four areas: access, connectivity, education and contents/services, the same areas earmarked within the country's own National Plan for Digital Inclusion.

The first project contemplates the distribution of 50,000 computers in rural areas of Bolivia. The second involves wireless WiMAX connections for university students, and the third seeks to train peasants around the Lake Titicaca and el Alto regions so that they can take part in an e-commerce network. The fourth project will consist in raising awareness around the need to recycle electronic waste, which should have a positive impact on environmental stewardship.

For more information: www.intel.com/intel/worldahead/index.htm

New regional Network Operators Forum launched: LACNOG

The Latin America and the Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry (LACNIC) announced the creation of a regional Network Operators Group (dubbed LACNOG) last December. Developed jointly by LACNIC, NIC Mexico and NIC Brazil, this forum aims to generate discussion of experiences and technical debates about issues related to the operation of TCP/IP networks. It is geared towards people with technical and operational responsibilities over Internet Service Providers, Universities and Academic Networks, Private Companies Networks and Internet Exchange Points of Latin American and Caribbean region, among others.

This initiative is seen as one more step in the consolidation of working groups and technical communities, which will add to successful fora such as the IPv6, Regional Interconnection and Security. Face-to-face activities of LACNOG will be held in conjunction with the annual LACNIC's meetings. LACNOG will initially be a discussion list, with free subscription, which you can access at http://lacnog.org.

New indicators and working groups arise from OSILAC workshop

Important agreements were reached regarding the presentation of harmonized indicators during the Fourth Regional Workshop on Information Society Measurement in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized by ECLAC's Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC) in San Salvador, 11 – 12 February 2008. Twenty countries from Latin America and the Caribbean participated in the workshop, which received funding from the Government of El Salvador and UNCTAD. Participants included 18 National Statistical Offices, six national institutions that encourage the development of ICT statistics, four international agencies, as well as academics, NGOs and representatives of the private sector.

Countries shared their experiences with incorporating ICT statistics into their surveys, as well as reports and documents published both in these countries and by ECLAC. Also highlighted were developments in the OSILAC Information System, which includes 10 publicly accessible and harmonized household surveys which enabled the creation of social, demographic and economic statistics on access to, and use of, ICTs in the region (www.cepal.org/tic/flash).

Given the need to advance towards the creation of new ICT indicators in some sectors, as well as the need to revise the methodologies used for the formulation of survey questions, four new Working Groups were created. Two will focus on issues related to household and business surveys, while the others will deal with ICT indicators in e-government and education. The latter will be integrated by members of Ministries of Education who took part in the First Workshop on ICT Indicators in Education. These four groups will work under the coordination of OSILAC and the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA)'s Working Group on ICT Measurement.

Last publications

http://www.eclac.org/SocInfo

Penetration of ICT goods and services in Latin American and Caribbean households

OSILAC, December 2007
LC/W. 173, 119 pp. (Spanish only)

This document employs data from the 2000 Population and Household Census rounds to describe penetration patterns of ICT goods in homes across the countries of the region. To this end, it explores the following issues: i) availability of ICT data in the 2000 Census Round, along with characteristics of the instruments for registering and measuring ICT ownership; ii) the penetration of different ICT goods, with a description of those household profiles with greater connectivity, while distinguishing significant digital divides, as well as territorial and socio-economic gaps; and iii) a combination of proposals for obtaining the best and newest information, via Census data, relative to the availability and penetration of ICT goods.

From State monopoly to technological convergence: the evolution and challenges of telecommunications regulation in Latin America

Carlos Razo y Fernando Rojas Mejía. December 2007
LC/L.2849-P, 40 pp. (Spanish only)

This study analyzes the evolution of regulatory schemes and their influence on the development of telecommunications in the countries of Latin America, focusing on the processes of nationalization and privatization. Moreover, it seeks to identify the role of, and the challenges for, regulation and regulators in universalizing services, within a context of change and technological convergence. The study provides convincing evidence: competitive markets demonstrate improved levels of telecommunications services at better prices as well as greater levels of investment and ICT penetration. As a result, it stresses the need for an independent and efficient regulatory institution, which promotes competition and prevents anti-competitive practices and their negative effects on both static and dynamic efficiency.

Broadband and local governments: an evaluation of experiences and recommendations

Germán Pérez Benítez.
88 pp. (Spanish only)

Divided into three parts, this publication begins by defining concepts and establishing conceptual frameworks. The second part includes global case studies, followed by a table that illustrates that geography and climate cannot be overlooked. Municipalities exist within concrete physical and socio-economic realities that can facilitate or impede the development of projects, dictate which broadband technologies may be more appropriate, as well as impact financing and other aspects. The study concludes by focusing on the availability of infrastructure as the principal characteristic for identifying "local broadband." The main lesson learned is that the intervention of local Governments in broadband services should be seen as a local issue. This understanding is essential if one is to ensure an improved and less-discriminatory mode of access to existing Internet applications and content.

Characteristics of households with ICTs in Latin America and the Caribbean

Michael Minges y OSILAC. December 2007
LC/W.171, 47 pp.

This report examines the availability of ICTs in households in Latin America and the Caribbean region, as well as socio-economic factors impacting ICT availability. The information used to prepare this document is contained in the Database of Household Surveys of ECLAC (BADEHOG), which has household survey data updated until 2005. The surveys cover over three quarters of the countries in the region and due to the inclusion of larger countries such as Brazil and Mexico, over 80% of the region's households are included. The ICTs that have been analyzed are: radio, television, fixed and mobile telephones, computer and Internet. The surveys include household and head-of-household characteristics allowing ICT information to be cross-referenced with socio-economic data. This provides a snapshot of the impact that some of these variables have on access to ICT goods and services.

The reports of five of the eLAC2007 Working Groups (on Regional infraestructure, Telework, Research and education networks, Creative content industries and Legislative frameworks) are now available, electronically, at: http://www.eclac.cl/id.asp?ID=32223