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

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DIGITAL AGENDA FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN (eLAC2024)

UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

A. BACKGROUND

Digital technologies are essential instruments to boost countries' productivity and growth and have significant effects in various areas critical to development, such as health, education and government services. In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), technological advances are considered vital for the identification of permanent solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges, and the main targets include significantly increasing access to information and communications technology and striving to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries.[1]

The pandemic accelerated digitalization and highlighted the important role of telecommunications for economic activity. However, it also exposed and deepened the differences and vulnerabilities related to this process. In this context, Latin America and the Caribbean must apply a set of policies that aim to narrow the digital divide and foster innovation and technological development. In this regard, the countries of the region must strengthen institutions, modernize the regulatory framework, improve coordination between different areas and levels of government, and promote dialogue between the public and private sectors as a basis for achieving common goals. There are many challenges in areas such as access to markets, the deployment of infrastructure and access to connectivity, innovation and the development of digital skills and competencies. It is also necessary to consider the protection of human rights and fundamental principles regarding inclusion, security, privacy and employment, among others.

The year 2022 marks 17 years since the adoption of the first Plan of Action for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was adopted in Rio de Janeiro in 2005. This plan aimed to consolidate a common vision of the role of digital technologies in fostering development. The Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean has facilitated the renewal of agreements and the eighth Ministerial Conference should focus on updating policy priorities at the regional level in addition to addressing challenges to improve the exchange of best practices, capacity-building, dialogue between the public and private sectors, and knowledge creation.

The proposal presented below sets out policy priorities and strategic actions at the regional level that are divided into four pillars. The first pillar relates to the push for universal and inclusive digitalization, and is mainly linked to infrastructure, connectivity, the development of skills and competencies, and essential elements to advance towards better governance, security and an enabling environment. The second pillar involves productive and sustainable digital transformation, and incorporates aspects related to the digital economy, entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainability, in a context where climate change and the reduction of the environmental impact are increasingly important. The third pillar is linked to digital transformation for social welfare and incorporates themes related to inclusion, innovation and digital transformation of the State. The fourth pillar refers to new partnerships and incorporates actions related to trade integration, the regional digital market and cooperation. The proposed Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024) includes 31 goals grouped in four pillars, which all incorporate the gender perspective.[2]

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[1]   Goal 9 and target 9c.
[2]   This proposal reflects the discussion held during the preparatory meeting of the eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Quito on 21 September 2022.

B. THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A DIGITAL AGE FOR ALL

1. Infrastructure, universal and meaningful connectivity

Goal 1: Promote the availability of affordable and quality broadband connectivity to all people, with special emphasis on those in conditions of vulnerability, and on unserved and underserved areas, remote and border areas, and rural and semi-urban areas, considering complementary solutions such as community networks.

Goal 2: Promote the deployment of new generation mobile networks through plans, initiatives and strategies that facilitate the provision of spectrum, in observation of international standards and recommendations, and taking countries' differing levels of readiness into account.

Goal 3: Promote policies and incentives to strengthen digital infrastructure and physical integration of the countries of the region, especially through the deployment of fibre-optic networks, the promotion of satellite connectivity, the establishment of Internet exchange points, the development of data centres and the adoption of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6).

2. Digital skills and competencies

Goal 4: Foster the development of digital skills and competencies in all people, in accordance with their needs and interests, as well as the protection of rights and the fulfilment of responsibilities in the digital environment, through teaching processes, the dissemination of best practices, spaces for participation and awareness campaigns.

Goal 5: Promote education and training policy plans and initiatives on the use and appropriation of digital technologies, that facilitate curricular adaptation, digital security, the use of digital resources, connectivity and the training of educators for the adaptation of teaching and learning in the digital age, all in coordination with the competent authorities.

Goal 6: Promote the development of digital skills and competencies that meet current and future employment demands, especially in cybersecurity and emerging technologies, encouraging continuous training by companies and governments in technical and professional areas.

Goal 7: Promote actions aimed at developing digital skills and competencies so that people can interact in digital environments in a safe, responsible and inclusive manner, with special attention to children, adolescents, women, the indigenous population, people with disabilities and older persons.

3. Governance, security and enabling environment

Goal 8: Strengthen institutions and provide resources to the entities responsible for designing, implementing, monitoring and advancing digital transformation policies, agendas and plans, and foster mechanisms for coordination between different public authorities and institutions and round tables with the private sector and key stakeholders.

Goal 9: Ensure there is an updated legal and regulatory framework that guarantees legal certainty, trust and the protection of the rights of individuals in the digital environment, based on internationally-agreed principles and collaboration with all stakeholders.

Goal 10: Improve measurement of the adoption of digital technologies in the economy and society, and strengthen the production and harmonization of official statistics, with special emphasis on the proposed goals of this Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024) and indicators with a gender dimension.

Goal 11: Promote cybersecurity policies and strategies with institutional and regulatory frameworks consistent with international recommendations, standards and human rights, which facilitate capacity-building, regional and international coordination and cooperation, the exchange of information, public and private sector coordination, the protection of data and critical infrastructure, and the creation and strengthening of computer emergency response teams.

Goal 12: Promote strategies and policies in relation to the prevention and investigation of cybercrime that include the development of State capacities, the implementation of international standards in terms of statistics and indicators, and the creation and strengthening of regional assistance and cooperation networks.

C. PRODUCTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

1. Digital economy, entrepreneurship and innovation

Goal 13: Promote the effective use of emerging digital technologies to foster productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship, especially facilitating solutions deriving from the Internet of things, artificial intelligence and green technologies, safeguarding the protection of human rights and the ethical use of technology.

Goal 14: Promote the digital transformation of firms with special attention to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), taking into account the promotion of skills, financing mechanisms, access and adoption of technology and e-commerce tools, among other instruments.

Goal 15: Promote entrepreneurship and the creation of technology-based companies that support digital transformation processes, through public and private sector collaboration, industrial promotion instruments, incubators, accelerators and business networks.

Goal 16: Promote financial innovation, the development of diverse financing options and new business models applied to the financial sector, especially the promotion of investment instruments and secure digital payment methods.

2. Digitalization for sustainability

Goal 17: Promote the digital transformation of strategic sectors such as agriculture, health, industry, trade, tourism and mobility, among others, with the aim to contribute to development, productivity, innovation and sustainability.

Goal 18: Promote the use of digital technologies to prevent, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, natural disasters and health emergencies.

Goal 19: Promote policies and instruments that enhance sustainability through digital technologies that can reduce negative environmental impacts with an emphasis on greenhouse gas emissions and polluting sectors.

D. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR WELL-BEING

1. Digital inclusion for equal opportunities

Goal 20: Promote new forms of employment and teleworking, updating labour policies and rules to ensure adequate social protection, decent work, health, social dialogue and workers' participation in the digital economy.

Goal 21: Promote accessibility in the digital environment to facilitate economic and social inclusion of people with disabilities, in situations of vulnerability and with specific needs.

Goal 22: Adopt a comprehensive perspective of gender equality and inclusion in digital policies to ensure the reduction of all digital gender gaps, with special attention to integrating girls and women into society.

2. Public innovation and digital transformation of the State

Goal 23: Develop digital public services with a citizen-centred, proactive and omnichannel service model.

Goal 24: Build capacities to support implementation of digital signatures and accelerate the use of cross-border digital signatures and services, strengthening digital transactions so that they are reliable and safe within a framework of regional integration.

Goal 25: Promote interoperability and data governance strategies to improve decision-making and public management, with adequate management of people, processes and technology.

Goal 26: Promote an open government approach and open data strategies to encourage transparency, innovation, feedback, accountability and citizen participation in the exchange of experiences and regional dialogue.

Goal 27: Adopt digital systems to modernize the public procurement of goods, services and public works in order to ensure transparency, monitoring, citizen oversight and effective accountability.

Goal 28: Promote the adoption of digital identities and cloud computing services in government to enhance digital public infrastructure, considering digital identity an enabling element of the digital economy and an instrument to encourage inclusion.

Goal 29: Promote digital agendas and strategies in communities, cities and local governments to advance in digital transformation and address challenges in public services, transport, mobility, resource management, security and productive development, among others.

E. NEW DIGITAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROSPERITY

1. Regional digital cooperation and integration

Goal 30: Improve regional cooperation processes on digital issues, including regional dialogue and multi-stakeholder forums on Internet governance to promote regional priorities while reinforcing democratic values, the sovereignty of peoples and fundamental rights in the areas of solidarity and inclusion, freedom of choice, participation, security and sustainability.

Goal 31: Promote the establishment of a regional digital market and cross-border e-commerce through reductions in administrative barriers, regulatory convergence, improvement of postal and logistics services, and innovation in digital payment services, by means of greater coordination, cooperation and dialogue among regional integration organizations and processes.

2. Targets of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024)

Below is a list of targets to be achieved within the framework of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024).

Targets for 2024	Baseline	Indicator
100% increase in the population covered by 5G networks	4.5% (2020)	Percentage of the total population covered by 5G networks
70% Internet penetration in homes	66% (2021)	Percentage of Internet penetration in homes[a]
78% mobile broadband penetration	73% (2020)	Number of active mobile broadband subscriptions
40% increase in fixed broadband connection speed	76 Mbps (2022)	Fixed broadband connection speed (Downstream)
30% increase in mobile broadband connection speed	31 Mbps (2022)	Mobile broadband connection speed (Downstream)
In 50% of the countries, the main transactional public services are available online	30% (2018)	Percentage of countries with transactional public services available online[b]
5% biennial increase in e-commerce companies	20.5% (2018)	Percentage of companies that receive orders online

Targets for 2024	Baseline	Indicator
40% of the population has basic digital skills	30% (2020)	Percentage of the population with basic digital skills[a]
10% of the population has advanced digital skills	5% (2020)	Percentage of the population with advanced digital skills[a]
20 countries have a national cybersecurity strategy	13 of 33 countries (2020)	Number of countries in the region with a national cybersecurity strategy

Note: Targets are based on regional averages and available information.
[a] Disaggregated by sex.
[b] Disaggregated by type of service.