

Towards the renovation of  
**eLAC2007**

*An Action Plan for  
Latin America and the Caribbean*  
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**Towards a new Regional Action Plan eLAC2010**

Outlining the intense efforts in consulting governmental and non-governmental experts, as well as the preparatory multi-stakeholder meetings, the main article offers an overview of the process that has led up to the elaboration of the current draft of the San Salvador Commitment – the base document for the political negotiations for a new Regional Action Plan eLAC2010. **(More on page 2)**

**Haiti develops pioneering virtual reality laboratory**

The first in a new series highlighting regional “success stories” details the story of the virtual reality laboratory and the InnoRev tool, currently being developed in Haiti. The project is an example of best practice and of local technological and educational development, noteworthy for this poor country which faces so many challenges. **(More on page 4)**



**The challenges for OSILAC as it enters its third phase**

In its task of generating harmonized national indicators that are comparable at an international level, the OSILAC Project is now entering its third phase. This article outlines its main objectives, which include the analysis of data on the use of and access to ICT, collected by the countries of the region, and the monitoring of policies related to ICT in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also details the efforts being undertaken to include key questions on ICT in business surveys. **(More on page 5)**



**Highlights of the Second Internet Governance Forum, Brazil 2007**

Nearly 1,400 people from 109 countries took part in more than 100 events during the Second Internet Governance Forum (IGF) held in Rio de Janeiro in November 2007. The focus was on issues of access, diversity, openness, security and ICT-for-development, as well as on critical Internet resources. **(More on page 8)**



**Knowledge Management, ICT and Innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Highlighting the relationship of State-society-business in the implementation of public policies and technological innovation, while analyzing the impact of national and regional ICT-for-development policies and programmes for the development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Corporate Social Responsibility – these were the main objectives of the regional seminar held in September 2007 at headquarters of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). **(More on page 9)**



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**II Ministerial Conference on the Information Society**

**El Salvador February 6, 7 and 8 of 2008**



# Towards a new Action Plan, eLAC2010

It appears that the need for the region to advance towards the development of its information societies is a unifying challenge that has fostered significant regional integration and which has great potential to encourage social cohesion. In fact, there are few issues on which the countries of the region have achieved such real progress, generated such enthusiastic participation, and reached consensus so readily in the formulation of public policies.

The Regional Action Plan on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2007) awakened intense interest and participation during its first three years of implementation. Approved during the Regional Conference in Rio de Janeiro (June 2005), 33 countries of the region drafted their own plan, with an array of 30 goals and 70 lines of action. It was based on the declaration of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), but adapted to the specific needs and priorities of Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the run-up to the 2nd Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, to take place 6 – 8 February 2008, in El Salvador, the time has come to revise the Regional Action Plan eLAC2007 and reach a renewed regional consensus around the new goals for an action plan for the 2008-2010 period.

“I encourage you to work with a true spirit of integration on the second aim for this event, namely to define the future priorities of the region and formulate the Plan of Action eLAC2010”, says the President of El Salvador, Elías Antonio Saca, in his welcome message released prior to the Ministerial Conference.

It is necessary to adapt to the changes in modern technologies and to the current priorities of the region, creating a new plan with realistic, short-term deadlines to encourage the development of the region through ICT.

Much intense work lies behind this process, including four in-person preparatory meetings in Santiago (September 2007), Buenos Aires (October 2007), Rio de Janeiro (November 2007) and a final meeting scheduled in Geneva (for January 2008). An extensive benchmarking activity was also undertaken to monitor the implementation of the previous plan, and a Delphi exercise on Public Priorities that sought feedback from a wide range of experts.

As a result, after a long process of regional consultations, the countries of the region are arriving at the Ministerial Conference on the Information

Society with a draft of reformulated goals and priorities – to be the base document for the final political negotiations for an eLAC2010.

eLAC represents a new type of regional agreement, in terms of its style, scope, issues covered and participating agents. The agenda covers a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary issue area that can have an impact on the most diverse aspects of development. Its working style emphasizes the design of technical proposals with a monitoring system, rather than a predominantly political approach in which initiatives are mainly declarative. Governments maintain the leadership role in the process of elaborating and implementing a public policy agenda, while facilitating the participation of new non-State actors, such as private sector companies, civil society, academia and international organizations.



“The goals of eLAC2007 create a link between the worldwide targets in digital development and the regional needs, by promoting new ways of dialogue and communication between people and government, while searching for tangible effects and technological solutions to real problems,” stresses President Saca.

eLAC’s working style emphasizes the need for technical proposals that incorporate monitoring systems, over declarations of good-will of a merely political nature.

During its first phase of implementation, from 2005-2007, eLAC2007 successfully encouraged most countries in the region to make significant progress towards a more integral development of their information societies. According to the *Monitoring eLAC2007* report (prepared by ECLAC and published in August 2007), as a whole, the countries of the region made progress in 15 of the 27 quantifiable goals, with the remaining 12 showing moderate to insufficient advances.

## From eLAC2007 to eLAC2010

Governmental and non-governmental participants stress the need for permanent coordination, monitoring and a strong institutional follow-up, given the speed of technological changes and the multiplicity of activities in such diverse countries. The plan also requires regular revision and renovation. Given that eLAC is a short-term process, it is possible to monitor the fulfillment of its goals and reformulate its objectives along the way, with the reinforcement of existing goals or the incorporation of significant changes.

As a result, the renewal of the Regional Action Plan eLAC2007 has



entailed a long process of consultations with experts from government, academia, the private sector and civil society. This began in 2006, with the elaboration of an *eLAC Policy Priorities Delphi* about ICT priorities for the year 2010, an exercise which has been a model of multi-stakeholder participation.

Experts throughout the region made 1,454 contributions and 14 international agencies contributed actively through both online and offline collaborations. The process consisted of three rounds of online surveys, which resulted in 1,274 online contributions from almost every country of the region, as well as personal interviews with more than 150 representatives from public, private and academic sectors as well as civil society. The importance and contributions of the multi-stakeholder approach are especially visible through virtual forms of participation. Most participants of this exercise of participative policy-making come from the private sector (39%), 25% from the public sector, 24% from the academic sector and 12% from civil society (NGOs).

The *eLAC Policy Priorities Delphi* exercise is considered an example of best practice in international participative policy-making in the digital age. According to its authors, it represents one of the most extensive participative online exercises in the history of intergovernmental policy-making processes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

To advance the results of the Delphi exercise, on 12 September 2007, regional interagency consultations were held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile. This event took place during four days of meetings, which covered issues such as: the role of public Internet access centers in social inclusion, the interoperability of e-government, and an Ibero-American meeting on Millennium Development Goals and ICT.

Decision-makers from more than 70 international institutions, the private sector and civil society attended the regional consultations, footing their own travel expenses in order to participate in the construction of what they consider an important agreement, because of the process behind its elaboration and its regional specificity.

“This initiative is very important because we believe that learning in the integration of new technologies and development is achieved with much more strength and efficiency to the degree that countries work together and develop activities at a regional level,” explains participant Ben Petrazzini, Director of the Institute for the Connectivity of the Americas, of Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC-ICA).

The input and recommendations from participants at the Santiago consultations were incorporated into the Delphi and taken to Buenos Aires, where the first preparatory Consultation Meeting for the Ministerial Conference in El Salvador was held from 4-6 October 2007. Representatives of the Government of El Salvador, host country for the Ministerial Conference, presented the first draft plan (dubbed the San Salvador Commitment), which reflects the specific goals and policy suggestions that arose out of the *eLAC Policy Priorities Delphi*, also incorporates additional goals proposed by various member countries.



“I think the process leading up to the new eLAC has been excellent,” says John Gillette, management specialist for the Ministry of Public Administration and Information, and representative for the Government of Trinidad & Tobago at the meeting in Buenos Aires. “In many cases the work going on within eLAC has a lot in common with what we’re doing within our own countries and it is affirming to know that so many other people and countries share similar concerns and strategies. Tapping into those synergies is one of the important benefits that can certainly come out of the eLAC process.”

At the Buenos Aires meeting, it was also agreed that this draft plan should be opened up to further national consultations, coordinated by the members of the Regional Follow-up Mechanism for eLAC2007, composed of Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, Trinidad & Tobago – plus Argentina as host country for the preparatory consultations – with coordination by ECLAC’s Information Society Programme, as technical secretariat. The mechanism, which also represents the subregions, held various audioconferences and two in-person meetings to advance on the draft plan – at the Internet Governance Forum in Rio de Janeiro (14 November 2007) and a second meeting scheduled in Geneva (January 2008).

According to Ecuadorian representative Luís Holguín, National Coordinator of CONATEL, the process has been positive but the countries of the region must take better advantage of the opportunity to have their say. “We have to get more involved,” believes Holguín.

At the beginning of November, the draft plan included 66 goals or activities to promote the improved use of ICT in education, infrastructure and access, health, public management, the productive sector, and strategies and policy instruments.

Between November and December, the draft of the San Salvador Commitment was also available online at <http://www.elac2007.org.sv/en/doc.php>, in its final phase of public consultation. The Government of El Salvador took comments by email and by fax. El Salvador incorporated comments and added new proposals to the draft. By mid-December, the draft already included more than 80 goals.

The resulting final draft represents the base document for political negotiations at the Regional Ministerial Conference about the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, eLAC2007, to be held in San Salvador from 6-8 February 2008. The task for Governments will be to evaluate the successes and pending challenges of information society development in the region, and determine the next steps to be taken for a concerted and renewed Regional Action Plan eLAC2010.

“I recognize that it is an enormous challenge,” says El Salvador’s President Saca, in an online message to delegates. “But with your experience in these and other issues, I am sure the outcome will be valuable. After all, this is how we will actively participate in an Information Society, not only as technology users, but also as dynamic agents of change for the social and economic development of Latin America and the Caribbean”



# Haiti develops pioneering virtual reality laboratory

Your heart breaks as you come home to discover your wife is leaving you. The reason: you have AIDS. That is just one of the scenarios participants are confronted with while using the anti-discrimination application of the InnoRev virtual reality tool, currently being developed in Haiti. Its objective is to increase sympathy and awareness, in an effort to change the way healthy people perceive those affected by AIDS.

The project is an example of best practices and local technological development that can be considered a 'virtual' success story in the region, particularly in a poor country like Haiti, which ranks last on the ITU's regional ICT opportunities index.

"We realized that there is an opportunity for a developing country like Haiti to position itself as a high-tech player rather than only struggling in a more traditional area of information technology where global competition is already mature," explains project leader Patrick Attié, Dean of the technical institute École Supérieure d'Infotronique d'Haiti (ESIH, <http://www.esih.edu>).

"Virtual Reality was a perfect candidate as the initial investment, although important, was still realistic and the technology itself has a huge development potential," says Attié.

The project began three years ago with an investment of close to US\$200,000 from the ESIH. This was used to finance the technical and physical infrastructure needed to build a laboratory, as well as funding for five graduate students from the institute to undertake a year of studies at the Institut des Sciences et Techniques de l'Ingénieur d'Angers (ISTIA) in Angers, France, which has one of the only Master's programmes entirely dedicated to Virtual Reality.

Today, Haiti's lab is fully operational and the students are back, working on two different virtual reality projects. One application interactively immerses users in a Haitian tourism site called "Parc de la Canne à Sucre." The other is the anti-discrimination application whose objective is to change the perception of healthy people towards the stigma of AIDS.

The first module of the project begins in February 2008 and involves preparing discrimination profiles for 100 students at the ESIH (using regarded psychological methodologies). Next, they will submit a different control group of 100 students to scenarios in 3D animation in the virtual reality environment. The idea is to analyze the differences in perceptions between both groups of students, and whether the virtual reality experience has an impact on changing perceptions.

Haiti's ESIH is developing this application in partnership with ISTIA and the University of West Indies (UWI, Jamaica). The discrimination profiles and virtual reality scenarios are being designed by two UWI psychologists.

Jeremy Bailenson, one of the world's leading experts on virtual reality, says research shows that using virtual reality tools such as "avatars," which put people in the shoes of the other, cause one to gain empathy for that "other," changing the users' behaviour. "People treat the elderly better when wearing a senior citizen avatar," explains Bailenson, who is Assistant Professor and Founding Director of Stanford's Virtual Human Interaction Lab. "The same concept may be very beneficial for AIDS discrimination."

Bailenson says his lab is looking at doing some research with ESIH, specifically in collaborative projects, and they are examining grant opportunities. "I think the idea of using digital technology to help a small and poor country specialize and perhaps accelerate in developing is a great concept," says Bailenson. "Virtual Reality is an extremely specific market in which a small group can make large inroads."



Attié says the project demonstrates that a developing country like Haiti can produce technology that has international relevance, despite great barriers. Haiti has no national education or technology policy, no legal framework for telecommunications, and importing merchandise is expensive and complicated. Add to that the political and economic instability, high cost of infrastructure and lack of Haitian involvement in the big technological markets.


"I strongly believe that intrinsic country poverty is not an excuse anymore to remain poor forever," says Attié.

The virtual reality lab is a first in the region – an achievement in its own right – and Attié sees great potential to adapt the content of this niche technology and the scenarios of its existing applications for different cultures. He equally sees opportunities to expand potential applications.

ESIH is currently seeking international partners interested in co-producing new VR applications in other fields, such as environment, health, waste management, energy, water, etc. This would involve partnerships with other laboratories, and business partners around the world to help ESIH bring this application to market.

Beyond the potential social and economic implications of this technology, this project is also noteworthy because it is developing regional educational expertise in technology. ESIH, which currently provides higher education in information technology and business management to roughly 1000 students in Haiti, is finalizing a new Masters programme in Virtual Reality, with classes to begin October 2008.

"I believe this action is a first in the Caribbean and should be considered an example on how to demonstrate that the Caribbean islands' economies do not have to rely strictly on tourism," says Attié.

This project not only represents a notable success story for the Caribbean, but it has been noted as a regional goal in ECLAC's *Delphi on Public Policy Priorities*. It has even been included as one of the goals in the draft of the new Regional Action Plan eLAC2010. Goal #7 of the draft aims to "disseminate experiences of the use of virtual reality tools as an ICT application in educational programs to foster tolerance and fight various forms of discrimination on the basis of, *inter alia*, race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, illness or disability" 



# The challenges ahead for the third phase of OSILAC

Monitoring the state of progress towards information societies involves evaluating all aspects of a society, which requires the collection of indicators on ICT use and access in various areas: infrastructure, education, government, health, the productive sector, etc. To this end, closer and more coordinated work is needed with international organizations, and most importantly with the relevant government institutions in each sector, given the quality and quantity of the information they produce.

Given that the process of building information societies is a global phenomenon, it is essential not only to generate national indicators but to ensure that these are comparable at an international level, and particularly in a regional context. The definition of basic referential indicators on digital development, by sector, is thus imperative. These must also be internationally comparable, so that they may be used to measure the level of progress of countries and so that they may contribute to the evaluation of national policies.

To address this need, ECLAC created the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC) in 2003 in collaboration with the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas, of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC/ICA). Since then, it has been working closely with the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA-ECLAC) and the National Statistical Offices it embodies. In its first year, OSILAC made significant headway in several areas, including defining harmonized indicators. In its second phase, it was joined by the European Commission, through the @LIS programme, in its continued quest for information society solutions. This phase featured progress on the effective measurement of core indicators, an expansion of their range, and monitoring of the goals enshrined in the Regional Action Plan eLAC2007.

Now in its third phase, the Observatory is analyzing data on ICT use and access gathered by the countries of the region, while continuing to promote the harmonization of data, in order to monitor and influence ICT-related policies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

OSILAC will initiate a new line of research based on official indicators to expand and deepen analysis on the advancement of ICT access, usage and capabilities, as well as their social, demographic and economic determinants.

The Observatory will also build on and continue the fruitful capacity-building work of recent years by widening the scope of countries and indicators, ensuring the quality and harmonization of indicators through methodological guides and intensifying training sessions. These activities will be combined with the collection and integration of all ICT-related data produced by countries, in an information system available online (<http://www.cepal.org/id.asp?ID=29154>). In addition, OSILAC will monitor policies and projects connected to the implementation of the eLAC Regional Action Plan, as well as related activities of relevant regional actors.

Specific objectives of this new phase will be:

- Carry out analysis of compiled information to deepen comprehension of the information society phenomena and its implications for regional development. Particular emphasis will be placed on analyzing the relationship between ICT usage by firms and their innovation behaviour.

- Strengthen the monitoring of ICT policies and projects, following the priorities defined by the countries of the region through their Regional Action Plan eLAC.
- Compile and standardize data and indicators from the region for analysis of ICT access, usage and capabilities, including methodological work to promote the harmonization of ICT-related indicators. Part of this activity will include constant collaboration and coordination with more advanced countries.
- Support countries in compiling and analyzing statistical data, either by developing capacity-building or providing direct assistance for survey implementation.


One of the main challenges of this phase is to move forward towards new indicators and new areas of measurement. OSILAC will focus on the harmonized collection of business indicators, ICT skills, as well as ICT indicators in the education and health sectors in particular.

Following the work OSILAC has carried out together with National Statistical Offices, one of the project's first areas of emphasis will be on technical assistance for the implementation of ICT questions in business surveys.

## ICT indicators in business surveys. An important challenge

Countries that have shown progress in incorporating agreed-upon core questions into their business surveys include: Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Peru and Uruguay. Chile, which was one of the reference countries for the inclusion of ICT questions, incorporated the questions in some of its business surveys up until 2005, and plans to resume doing so in 2008. Colombia also included the questions in 2001, and has included them again in 2007. Barbados used them in 2003, but has not continued. Brazil's Internet Steering Committee (CGIB) conducted a business survey in 2005 and 2006, and plans to repeat the exercise in 2008 together with IBGE, the Brazilian Institute of Statistics. Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago have also included some of the questions in their business surveys.

In the last three years, nine of the region's 33 countries have incorporated at least one core ICT indicator in their surveys. Eight of these countries are Latin American, and one Caribbean. Nevertheless, comparability problems remain to be addressed.

Besides the core indicators already agreed in 2005 by National Statistical Offices, it is important to move forward towards new indicators to evaluate the impact of ICT on productivity. According to the *Compendium of Practices for implementation of ICT questions in household and business surveys*, published recently by OSILAC, the number of employees dedicated to technologies in firms of all sectors, investments in ICT, skills and training of employees, and the perception of impacts produced by the introduction of these technologies. The priority and relevance of these indicators should be agreed between Statistical Offices and regional and international actors involved in the process of ICT measurement, taking into account the need to generate adequate information on the contribution of ICT to economic growth 



# Stakeholder's opinions:

## What is the importance of regional collaboration in ICT-for-development? What is the role that a regional action plan like eLAC can and should play?

### Rafael Fuentes

Coordinator of the ICT Agenda  
Andean Development Corporation (CAF)



CAF sees regional collaboration in ICT as a great opportunity to create synergies with infrastructure and human capital, and as a result, we have started exploring spaces for interaction with players related to ICT, offering our knowledge of the region and our experience in planning and undertaking projects so as to identify more cost-effective investment opportunities in telecommunications and to take advantage of these synergies and encourage greater social inclusion, governmental efficiency, and appropriation of knowledge and new businesses. Collaboration allows us to work in a sustained and systematic manner to achieve the confidence of our shareholders, so as to clearly identify their requirements with a view to planning and developing projects that have an impact on their national and regional agendas. That is why, in undertaking new projects, we have identified an enormous potential for collaboration with the institutions dedicated to disseminating technological knowledge, which motivates us to perpetuate a virtuous circle that can generate enormous benefits for regional integration and sustainable development – fundamental pillars for CAF.

The eLAC plan aims to develop and consolidate a wide range of actions and projects in the region, while considering the experiences of diverse actors. If the eLAC plan succeeds in building such a platform for the exchange of ideas, this will contribute to the creation of a true space for collaboration in ICT, which would yield relationships built on confidence and the sustained and effective participation of the region 🌐

### Hernán Galperin

Member of the Steering Committee  
Regional Dialogue on the Information Society (DIRSI)



The growing interdependence between countries makes regional cooperation a key element for Governments to be able to reach their public policy objectives. Without this component of supranational coordination, the individual actions of Governments tend to be less effective. The need for regional cooperation is increasingly recognized in diverse areas such as energy policy, national security and industrial competitiveness. However in ICT, where progress is precisely one of the motors of the increased interdependence among countries, the coordination of sectoral policies and regulatory action becomes fundamental.

One textbook case is the need to coordinate critical Internet resources (such as assigned names and numbers and IP addresses). The same can be said for the requirements and obligations established by national regulators for obtaining fixed telephony licenses, which are less and less relevant given the possibility of using IP telephone services from any other country. The need for coordination in the assignment of radio frequencies is no longer limited to problems of interference in border areas but has become a requirement for the development of economies-of-scale where increasingly globalized actors operate.

In this context, it is indispensable to resolve problems through the collective action of Governments through medium- to long-term regional

action plans. While their content could be improved, the measures undertaken under the eLAC plan are an interesting starting-point which deserves support and continuity 🌐

### Miguel A. Porrúa

e-Government Coordinator  
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI/OAS)



In the area of ICT, regional collaboration is fundamental for various reasons. The projects involved are generally expensive, time-consuming and have a high probability of facing obstacles that can impede their conclusion and increase their costs. The possibility of building on the achievements of another country and learning from its experiences can save many countries significant financial resources. On the other hand, interoperability is essential to the effective performance of e-government, not only at a national but at a transnational level. Regional collaboration is required so as to foster this interoperability in the solutions of different countries.

The Executive Secretariat for Integral Development of the OAS has developed the Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean (RedGeALC) in order to facilitate regional collaboration in e-government. Initiatives such as eLAC2007, which recognize RedGeALC as a cooperation instrument for e-government, are fundamental both in order to position ICT on the regional political agenda, as well as to generate concrete projects that allow the commitments agreed to in documents such as eLAC2007 to become a reality.

The fact that eLAC2007 allows Latin America and the Caribbean to connect with the experiences of the European Union, related to the information society, deserves special mention given the EU's enormous value as a reference point and a source of knowledge 🌐

### João Carlos Ferraz

Director of planning and risk management  
Brazil's National Economic and Social Development Bank (BNDES)




There are three indications that we have a unique window of opportunity to facilitate regional cooperation in ICT. The first is economic, given the dynamic and rapid advance of ICT dissemination in Latin America and the Caribbean. Connecting networks gives power to the people. If there is integration in cooperation, this increases economies-of-scale, lowering prices, so there is a financial justification. Policies must also operate at a regional level (with national specifics). And both political and technical interoperability is needed.

Second: there is already a long 7-year history behind this regional cooperation. The people of Latin America and the Caribbean have gathered in various fora, so there is an accumulation of joint work. Now is the time for action, on concrete projects. All countries have policy experiences and a certain institutionality, which means they all have something to learn and something to offer.

Third: the issue of integration through ICT-for-development is one with low political barriers. Everyone sees ICT as something positive, and more cooperation is a win-win situation. There are no losers here. We have a



unique historic opportunity to make policies interoperable, an opportunity we cannot lose. eLAC's role is as an instrument to cement this regional integration through ICT 


### **Raúl Echeverría**

Chief Executive Officer

Latin American and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry (LACNIC)



Regional collaboration exists on two fronts: in the definition and design of regional plans and in the execution of development projects. In recent years, through the experiences resulting from the World Summit on the Information Society and in the debates on Internet Governance, there has been an irreversible consolidation of a model based on the participation and collaboration of all actors. This model is not exclusive to the issues related to the information society, but it is in these issues where for the first time it has become so clear that such wisdom and experience are so highly distributed. Many of the initiatives that contribute to achieving such development objectives emanate from non-governmental sectors, which makes collaboration at a political level all the more fundamental as a tool for generating the necessary commitments so that all sectors involved will work towards their common, agreed-upon goals. It is only through the cooperation of all relevant actors that significant progress can be made towards the development of information societies in the region.

The regional plan must serve as the reference point that reflects the expectations for development of all relevant sectors. The plan itself is not binding nor necessarily the catalyst for local level action, but it represents the aspirations of the region, constitutes a standard against which to measure local progress, and it ensures that all actors are working on the same issues from a common understanding. If this regional action plan is elaborated in a reliable, open and participatory way, it will also serve as an indicator for the actions of the private sector, international organizations and donors who may base their initiatives on this overriding plan, rather than develop parallel processes 

### **Isidro Fernandez-Aballi**


Communication and Information Advisor

UNESCO's office for the Caribbean



Harnessing ICT is one of the main challenges for people around the world to achieve the peaceful development of a more humane, democratic, just, and supportive society that is characterized by the more widespread dissemination of knowledge, the free-flow of ideas and by free and fair universal access to information.

Given their relative social development and linguistic and cultural homogeneity, Latin America and the Caribbean have an extraordinary relative advantage when it comes to strengthening regional cooperation in ICT. It is only by means of this cooperation that the region can achieve an acceptable level within the modern global knowledge and information society that is currently being built. Such collaboration is imperative so that the countries of the region, while preserving their own cultural identity, may harmonize their national development with that of the region and the world, and strengthen their educational systems, scientific research, health, governance and business productivity.


eLAC2010 can and must make it a priority to work directly with the actors and Governments to implement a short-term strategy that will allow the region to reach minimal development quotas, the implementation of ICT policies, the standardization of protocols and interoperability, and collaboration on culture, education, science & technology and governance issues 

### **Ing. Jaime Herrera**

President of the Working Group on Connectivity in the Americas  
Inter-American Telecommunications Conference (CITEL/OAS)



All of the countries of the Americas undertake efforts to develop the information society, creating e-governments, transforming municipalities into digital communities, struggling against both the internal and international digital divide, and producing useful applications for their citizens.

This is momentous work which makes the need for regional collaboration imperative, given that it can allow the development of replicable projects in smaller areas with small adjustments, which saves time and scarce resources by eliminating the duplication of efforts. CITEL fosters the harmonious and integral development of telecommunications in the Americas, by taking advantage of the dissemination of best practices and by preparing social, economic, technical and regulatory recommendations on telecommunications that take into account the region's specific characteristics. The efforts undertaken in all countries of the region often lack the appropriate strategic orientation, to prevent them from pursuing paths that do not necessarily share the same philosophy of development. eLAC will provide the well-defined orientation so that the Governments of our countries, when defining their national development strategies, may be guided by regional strategies, so as to guarantee the harmonious development of the entire region. It is worth noting the importance of inter-institutional consultations, to coordinate the work being done at the level of the Americas, and to eliminate redundancy in future work plans by taking into account the activities of all actors. Finally, a ministerial agreement will allow high-level officials to sign on to the plan and commit to its implementation 


### **Elena García**

Technical coordinator  
Latin American Network of  
Educational Portals (RELPE)



ICT can represent a key factor in the development of the region, but the expected favourable impact will depend on the time it takes to develop policies for the integration of technologies in their various fields of application. In fast-progressing sectors such as ICT, where many paradigms that seem innovative do not achieve the acceptable maturity for their generalization, delays add up to obsolescence, and pressures can lead to mistakes that are hard to overcome.

Regional collaboration can help diminish these risks through information-sharing among equals in the search for regional solutions to common problems, through the development of joint pilot projects that allow cross-referencing of results, through the obvious savings in time and resources that result from eliminating the duplication of efforts, and by designing strategies for evaluation and follow-up that can guide future decisions.

By constructing a map of indispensable requirements to prevent increasing existing divisions, and the presentation of desirable medium- and long-term scenarios to sustain the real development of our countries, eLAC has already contributed substantially to guiding the decisions of the Governments and organizations of the region on ICT matters. In addition to the proposal of common regional goals, it can also encourage regional or multinational actions that reinforce these efforts and allow for more secure and advantageous progress for all. Collaboration on these issues is the only way to accelerate the changes needed 



# Highlights of the Second Internet Governance Forum, Brazil 2007

**Rio de Janeiro** – The need to improve regulation and expand Internet access for the 5 out of the world’s 6 billion people who are not “online” were the main issues at the II Internet Governance Forum (IGF) held in Rio de Janeiro, 12 – 15 November 2007.

Almost 1,400 people from 109 countries participated in this second IGF, an annual event that arose from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). In keeping with the first IGF held in Athens in 2006, this forum focused on the issues of access, diversity, openness, security and Internet-for-development – while also tackling the new theme of critical Internet resources.

The forum included a total of 100 events, which ranged from workshops, best practice seminars, “dynamic coalition” meetings, open forums, and book launches. The host country Brazil put strong emphasis on the meeting and four ministers (strategic affairs, science and technology, communications, and culture) participated in the plenary sessions.

New topics on the agenda included protection against child pornography online, physical and logistical infrastructure needs, interconnection points, IP and DNS server management, as well as content regulation and the duty of States to protect fundamental rights to freedom of expression, and Internet security.

During an emerging issues session, discussion over Internet regulation and user responsibility dominated the agenda. Speakers included pioneering figures such as Vint Cerf and Bob Kahn, who took part in the creation of the TCP/IP Protocol in the 1970s.

The IGF 2007 also featured the launch of new “dynamic coalitions” – groupings of like-minded participants across the globe uniting forces towards a common goal. Eleven dynamic coalitions were established during the first IGF (for more information see: <http://www.intgovforum.org/Dynamic%20Coalitions.php>)

Yale law professor Eddan Katz, who helped coordinate a new dynamic coalition on digital education launched at the IGF 2007, says such coalitions help concentrate efforts on a given topic, bringing together existing momentum and facilitating communication across communities.

The IGF Forum itself is not a decision-making body, but a space for

multi-stakeholder dialogue on Internet governance issues. The idea is not to end up with a negotiated outcome or declaration, but to foster discussion on public policy issues and create new connections between participating institutions.



“The United Nations does not have a role in managing the Internet,” emphasized UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang, who delivered the words of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the meeting. “You meet here as equals, not to make decisions or to negotiate, but to discuss, exchange information, and share good practices and lessons.”


Still, several forum participants opened a debate as to whether the IGF should grow beyond its no-decisions, dialogue-only capacity. Some participants

asked for more concrete results and a new structure for the management of critical Internet resources.

Representatives from Brazil presented a variety of proposals on how to reform the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), restricting its role to that of a coordinating organization. There was extensive discussion on the future of ICANN and its relation with the US Department of Commerce, while Brazil recommended that a new international agency composed of civil representatives should govern access.

Rogério Santana, of Brazil’s Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management, also stressed the need to democratize and increase online public scrutiny over Governments, as well as the need to achieve interoperability within and between the region’s Government services.

The issue of linguistic diversity was another concern expressed by many at the Forum, who fear local languages will be side-stepped on the Internet in favour of a more homogeneous culture. To that end, UNESCO is currently working with the ITU (International Telecommunications Union) and ICANN towards an agreement on universal standards on languages and a multi-lingual Internet. ICANN is also testing domain names which use alphabets from a range of languages, including Arabic.

The last day of the Forum was marked by an evaluation and a discussion of new issues. One of the most common demands was that future IGF meetings (the next is slated for New Delhi in 2008) produce a final document with recommendations 



# SELA seminar: Knowledge Management, ICT and Innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean

*By: The Division of Information and Knowledge Networks  
Permanent Secretariat, Latin American and Caribbean  
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Between 6 and 7 September 2007, the regional seminar “Knowledge Management, ICT and Innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean,” was held at the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), in Caracas, Venezuela. This multi-stakeholder event was sponsored by the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), the SELA-IberPYME Programme, and the Central Bank of Venezuela (BCV), along with the support of ECLAC.

Its main objectives included: highlighting the relationship of State-society-business in the implementation of public policies and technological innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean; analyzing the impact of national and regional ICT-for-development policies and programmes for the development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), being carried out in the region; and promoting the exchange of experiences between Governments, and intra-regional cooperation, with a view to strengthening national capabilities in the management of public policies for the development of SMEs and CSR.

This was organized with the intention of contributing effectively to the Regional Action Plan for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, eLAC2007, specifically with reference to goal 12 (businesses). Speakers included representatives from Governments, academia and NGOs from Costa Rica, Chile, Nicaragua and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as the CAF, MERCOSUR, CARICOM and CENPROMYPE/SICA.

It is worth noting the public’s satisfaction with the various presentations, which generated productive discussions as well as ideas and suggestions that were in large part crystallized in the conclusions and recommendations derived from the regional seminar. These highlighted: the central presence of knowledge management, innovation and ICT in the global economic, social and political agenda, and its high relevance for sustainable development processes and integration in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; the need to exceed a series of existing limitations in the training of human resources for the administration of technology and management, and the reliability of connectivity and its accessible cost; in addition to the fact that innovation processes tend to have their nucleus in social networks, which constitute articulating elements for the development of communities.


At the same time, the recommendations emanating from the regional seminar represent important challenges for the region. Many of them coincide in large part with the results of the *eLAC Policy Priorities Delphi* and can no doubt be seen as input for the renovation of the next Regional Action Plan (eLAC2010).

These recommendations were geared towards assigning optimal value to the relationship, interaction and dialogue between the State-society-business in the design and instrumentation of public policies in the area of technological management and innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean. They seek to regionalize national public policies on innovation, ICT and the support of SMEs in order to strengthen regional productive integration and the institutional frameworks needed to build confidence. Moreover, they aim to encourage capacity-building in the creation and strengthening of abilities associated with the processes of administration and information analysis, for the enrichment of management skills and knowledge, and for fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. All of this is part of a wider effort to intensify SELA’s work on the initiatives currently being undertaken by SMEs in the region and on the creation of

information, knowledge and innovation networks, in support of the administration of public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this sense, SELA’s Permanent Secretariat aspires to participate and actively contribute to the realization of goals relevant to the Regional Action Plan eLAC2010.

To this end, by means of its Division of Information and Knowledge Networks and the SELA/IberPYME Programme, SELA has

included concrete actions in its 2008 Work Plan, geared towards virtual training for small and medium-sized enterprises in the region, in partnership with Virtual Educa (SEGIB), in the construction of a knowledge base of information products and experiences related to the incorporation and social appropriation of ICT in the region. This, with a view to promoting new channels of communication between interested institutions as well as synergies and inter-organizational complementarities for the benefit of Member States in the region 




# ICT news briefs

## Iberoamerican Summit backs renovation of eLAC plan until 2010

During the XVII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Santiago, Chile, 8-10 November 2007, participants highlighted the importance of new information and ICT for raising the level of social and economic development of their people, particularly as a privileged tool to achieve these goals. In this sense, they ratified the commitments made during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), during its phases in Geneva and Tunis, aimed at promoting and consolidating an inclusive information society geared towards bridging the digital divide.

Point 10 of the Summit's recently approved Action Plan, seeks to: "Support, at the Second Ministerial Conference on the Information Society to take place in El Salvador, the Regional Action Plan for the Information Society eLAC2007, approved during the First Ministerial Conference on the Information Society which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2005, and its renovation until 2010, as an inclusive framework of goals to be met in the creation of an Information Society focused on the individual, geared towards development (Tunis 2005)."


The Heads of State and Government equally underlined the importance of eLAC2007, as the "most important regional initiative in this matter," in the context of the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals and the goals set out in the WSIS Plan of Action 

## e-Agriculture.org promotes ICT for agricultural development

On 28 September 2007, the e-agriculture.org website was launched as a global initiative to enhance sustainable agricultural development and food security by improving the use of information, communication, and associated technologies in the sector.

"The aim is to enable members to exchange opinions, experiences, good practices and resources related to e-agriculture, and to ensure that the knowledge created is effectively shared and used worldwide," explains Charlotte Masiello-Riome, Communication and Promotion Officer for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), one of the organizations behind the site.

The international community identified e-agriculture as a priority in its Action Plan during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). This emerging field seeks to raise the importance given to agriculture and rural development through improvements in communication and learning, information-sharing, based on the use of the Internet and other digital technologies.


Over 2,000 stakeholders were involved in bringing e-agriculture.org to life. Community members participated in the development of the web-based platform by providing content, including news items, resources and other materials and participating in online forums during July and August 2007 in preparation for the open launch. The site, which currently has around 2,500 members representing 128 countries, also features blogs 

## Chile announces major investment in rural digital connectivity

The government of Chile will subsidize access to telecommunications and connectivity for the most rural and remote areas of the country. With a public-private partnership investment of more than US\$150 million, the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications hopes to close the digital divide in rural areas and improve the productive development of Chile's agricultural and tourism sectors.

"We want to initiate a revolution in the rural world in terms of access to telecommunications services, which will have an enormous impact on the productivity and development of the country," declared Under Secretary for Telecommunications, Pablo Bello. "The goal is to connect 95% of Chile's rural areas by 2010, a historic jump when one considers that the 2002 Census revealed that only 1% of rural households had access to telecommunications services."

The Government of Chile is dedicating what it calls an "historic amount" for digital connectivity subsidies in its 2008 budget, a figure that triples all funding that had been devoted to this matter during the 13 years of existence of the Telecommunications Development Fund.


Chile's SUBTEL will put US\$80 million up for public bidding, to install access networks for the Internet, mobile and IP telephony and data transmission, in Chile's 15 regions, specifically in remote and rural areas. This public contribution will be complemented by private enterprises, because those who win the subsidies must at least double the State investment 

## New paradigms seen in seminar on technology policy and development

The relationship between technological change and economic development with the formulation of appropriate public policies were the principal issues of the international seminar "Technology policies and development in Latin America," held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, 6 - 7 December 2007. Attended by internationally renowned experts and high-level officials from governments responsible for science and technology policies in more than 15 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the seminar offered a space for dialogue on the main challenges in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of science and technology policies in the region. It equally addressed how to design and implement appropriate policies to stimulate the accumulation, dissemination and incorporation of knowledge into products and organization and productive processes.

The seminar also featured the launch of an ECLAC website for technology policies: *CyT-DES, science and technology for development*, created under a ECLAC-GTZ Programme.

The site is available at: [www.cepal.org/iyd](http://www.cepal.org/iyd).

Professor Carlota Pérez, of the Universities of Cambridge and Sussex, suggested in her lecture that the world has just reached the middle of the 'digital paradigm.' Other participants said that although the digital or technological paradigm is currently dominant, there is a need for new paradigms centered on biotech or nanotechnology 



# Latest publications

## ECLAC - Information Society Programme

<http://www.cepal.org/SocInfo>

### **Information Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean: Development of ICT or ICT for development**

Information Society Programme, ECLAC. 2008

With its subtle and provocative title, this institutional publication serves as both a summary of the research undertaken by ECLAC in recent years on ICT, as well as an invitation to the intellectual debate which questions the very meaning of the concept ICT-for-development. To this end, the book is divided into two main sections: the first examines the extent to which Latin America and the Caribbean have followed a more industrial approach to the development of ICT; the second explores the emerging applications for ICT, which reflects the current tendency to pursue a more integral approach to human development, using ICT *for* development. The first section details the regional experiences in creating national hardware and software industries, incursions into the telecommunications operators market, telecom regulation, and the debate over intellectual property rights. The second section analyzes the dichotomy proposed by this book's title given the use of ICT in various emerging areas: such as digital education, e-government, ICT for health and managing natural disasters, and e-commerce. The book also tackles the issues of access and the persistence of the digital divide, while outlining the possible economic impact of these technological tools. It offers an analysis of how successful the region's ICT policies and strategies have been, and concludes with a chapter of recommendations from ECLAC.

### **White Book on regional interoperability for Latin America and the Caribbean**

ECLAC, Information Society Programme.  
March 2008

This book is based on the experiences and interoperability projects that are underway in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago, which served as a basis for the conceptualization of an architecture and interoperability platform for Latin America and the Caribbean which has been developed by ECLAC. The content is based on the interoperability experiences of the European Union, given that it includes studies, practices and agreements that can be taken into account in the dialogues undertaken by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on this subject matter. It also contains definitions around which dialogues and solutions can be established on organizational, semantic, technical and governance problems that must be resolved in order to enable the secure and efficient exchange of information between countries. On the basis of these definitions, an Interoperability Architecture is proposed, which takes into account the factors necessary in order for this initiative to develop successfully in the region.

### **Monitoring eLAC2007**

OSILAC. September 2007  
LC/W.151, 143 pp.

This document analyses the current state of information societies as well as the region's progress towards implementing eLAC2007 – the 2005-2007 Regional Plan of Action on the Information Society for Latin America and the Caribbean. The monitoring and supervision phase is vital to a successful policy, since it allows for assessment of both impact and policy implementation. Aware of the limitations and problems of this process, the ECLAC Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC) has undertaken the task of monitoring progress toward achieving the eLAC2007 goals. This document presents its findings. The exercise focused on 27 of the 30 goals and outlines the situation in critical areas to the development of the information society in the region, in order to identify pending digital challenges.

### **Inf. Society and public ICT policies in the Caribbean**

Carlos Miranda Levy. August 2007  
LC/W.155, 98 pp.

This document is the result of a research, awareness- and capacity-building project on public policies on ICT in the Caribbean region, developed by ECLAC. The author concludes that all elements are in place for the Caribbean to take off and materialize the promise of ICT for human development. With proper regional coordination, intelligent allocation of resources and harmonized deployment of international cooperation and local structural reforms, he argues that the region can overcome its current lag in terms of ICT penetration and transform itself into a key player in the international arena, increasing competitiveness of its business sectors, as well as improving the living conditions of its citizens and the governance of its local communities.

### **Collaboration between working groups**

Birgit Gocht. August 2007  
LC/W.150, 68 pp. (Spanish only)

This document offers an introduction to the methods and basic principles of working in diverse groups, in the context of the specific characteristics of the system provided for in eLAC2007. Aimed at readers who seek information as to the basic elements needed in order to initiate and direct a working group, particularly regarding its structure, dynamic and general work methodology. Guidelines are also included in the steps, methods and instruments that allow for a fruitful collaboration between working groups. This document aims to guide coordinators, promoters and those responsible for policy-making, who could participate in the procedures related to the working groups of eLAC2007.



# Interviews: What does the new eLAC2010 plan mean to your organization?

## **BEN PETRAZZINI**

**Institute for Connectivity in the Americas, International Development Research Centre (IDRC/ICA):**

“The plan is highly valuable for us because it allows the distinct division of very concrete and precise goals, which provides us with perspective from the region, from its social bases, on the priority areas that are key for the social investments that IDRC makes in the region.”

## **VALERIA BETANCOURT**

**Association for Progressive Communications (APC):**

“This is also an opportunity to cement the opportunity for citizens to involve themselves in a much more effective and active way not only in the formulation and the design of the ICT services they receive, but also in the policies that determine in which conditions citizens can access ICT.”

## **ALTON GRIZZLE**

**Programme Officer for the Caribbean, UNESCO:**

“We see follow-up to the World Summit on Information plan as critical. We need to translate that international action to what is important at the regional level. And this is what eLAC2010 offers. ... We’re looking forward as UNESCO, in leading up to eLAC2010, to play a more active role in ensuring greater Caribbean participation.”

## **PABLO HINOJOSA**

**Internet Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers (ICANN):**

“I don’t think we have personally taken advantage or participated enough in the region in this process. There are very interesting business opportunities around the system for names and it would be great to have business models that could also have a positive impact on the development of the economy of information societies in Latin America.”

## **RAUL DÉJEAN**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Argentina:**

“This effort that has been made, all of the resources that have been applied therein, and the expectations that have been generated, must all translate into concrete results to the benefit of the communities of Latin America.”

## **JOSÉ MARÍA OLSEN**

**Former president of Costa Rica:**

“I believe that a programme should also be Developer which would continuously monitor these actions, year by year, in order to measure the results of these efforts. What is not measured, is not done.”

## **CÉSAR YAMMAL**

**Development Gateway Foundation:**

“These conversations must be turned into goals and very concrete objectives. In this sense, ECLAC is doing an excellent job of putting forward quantitative goals, and in challenging us a little, to keep making progress.”

## **JOSÉ LUIS TESORO**


**Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD):**

“Technological agnosticism is vital. We must translate our desires, without clinging to any kind of constraints that are in style today because these can change completely. As such, we are generating genuine and authentic vision, or perspective.”

Please note: these comments were extracted from interviews with these participants at a series of seminars held in September 2007 at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile. Seven of the eight were translated from Spanish. Portions of the interviews are available in video format in their original languages on ECLAC’s website at: <http://media.eclac.cl/socinfo/092007/TIC.htm>

## GAID Latin American and Caribbean Regional Network to be launched in El Salvador

A seminar organized by the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA GAID), the Inter-American Development Bank, the IDRC-ICA and ECLAC, will take place from 4-5 February 2008 at the Radisson Hotel in San Salvador. The seminar

will gather ICT-for-development experts to elaborate concrete proposals to present at the II Ministerial Conference, in the areas of ICT and poverty eradication, health, education, youth employment, and e-government for improved accountability. The event will also feature the launch of the GAID Latin American and Caribbean Regional Network 

The opinions expressed in this publication are the exclusive responsibility of the authors and may not coincide with those of the organizations concerned. Nor do they reflect the official position of the European Union, which has assisted financially with the preparation of this publication.

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