

**REPORT OF THE EIGHTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE INFORMATION  
SOCIETY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Montevideo, 16–18 November 2022

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## A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### Place and date of the meeting

1. The eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Montevideo from 16 to 18 November 2022 and was convened by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), by virtue of resolution 761(XXXIX) of the thirty-ninth session of ECLAC and in follow-up to the agreements adopted at the seventh Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, held in a virtual format from 23 to 26 November 2020.

### Attendance<sup>1</sup>

2. The Conference was attended by representatives of the following member countries of ECLAC: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

3. Representatives of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental organizations, cooperation agencies and the private sector, whose names appear in the list of participants, also attended.

### Election of officers

4. The Conference elected the following Presiding Officers:

Chair: Uruguay

Vice-Chairs: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Ecuador

## B. AGENDA

5. The Conference adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Opening session.
4. Presentation of the position paper prepared by the secretariat entitled *A digital path for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean*.
5. Panel discussions.
6. Other matters.
7. Consideration and adoption of the proposed digital agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024) and the draft Montevideo Declaration.

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<sup>1</sup> See annex 3.

### C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

#### Opening session (agenda item 3)

6. At the opening session, statements were made by Rodrigo Ferrés, Undersecretary in the Office of the President of Uruguay; Hebert Paguas, Executive Director of the National Agency for e-Government and Information Society (AGESIC) of Uruguay; Pablo Ruiz Hiebra, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Uruguay; and José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary of ECLAC.

7. The Undersecretary in the Office of the President of Uruguay said that the impact of technological progress on relationships between public administrations, companies and people was positive, and noted the leap forward in digitalization during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The development of digital agendas also involved other subjects and regulations to be implemented. The need for foresight should be clear to people in positions of public responsibility, and advance preparation would be needed in certain situations linked to people's needs. Public policies needed to be designed and implemented with a high degree of accountability and efficiency, in the knowledge of what citizens needed and by choosing the appropriate means to fulfil the goals of public administration for the good of all. At the end of the day, human rights must always be borne in mind.

8. The Executive Director of AGESIC recalled that digital agendas had been State policy in Uruguay since 1999 and pointed to the Uruguay Innovation Hub programme, the aim of which was to boost the information and communications technology (ICT) ecosystem in the country. Uruguay was working with the European Union to become an information security hub in the region. Focusing on the private sector, work had begun in earnest on emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, machine learning and the blockchain, with a view to the region enjoying more agile and simple services, while maintaining a people-centred approach. He underscored the need to encourage digital citizenship and said that doing so meant not only having the required tools but also having the capacity to use them. Lastly, he emphasized that Uruguay remained committed to the region and great strides had been made, for example, on cross-border digital signatures and on accountability and transparency.

9. The Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Uruguay underscored the role ECLAC played in the region and recalled that, historically, the Commission's influence in shaping development processes in the region had been key. To speak of the future was to speak of data, science, changes to work and the fourth industrial revolution. Work would continue with other entities of the United Nations system, governments and other actors in society on the choices that the country must make to decisively take the lead on development. His office was firmly committed to the programmatic support offered to government bodies and to AGESIC, among others; it would also support the themes to be discussed during the Conference and was interested in hearing the ideas, good practices and suggestions that would be brought forward.

10. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the development crisis was reflected in the deterioration of multiple indicators of well-being and socioeconomic performance in various dimensions (productivity, poverty, health, education, employment, gender equality and trust in institutions). There was a need to work on both reducing inequality and creating wealth, through productive development and digital transformation policies. Globalization had changed and stronger regionalization was creating great opportunities for growth. Digitalization was a priority focus for the transformation of development models, and to achieve common connectivity goals, countries should promote public-private dialogue and improve institutional and regulatory frameworks and coordination between different areas of government. It was crucial to move towards a regional digital market and to recall that forums for multilateral and multisectoral

cooperation would be increasingly important. To meet the challenges of the regional digital agenda, synergies with other regional and international cooperation mechanisms should be strengthened, technical cooperation should be boosted and instruments that facilitated policy design and regulatory convergence should be provided.

Presentation of the position paper prepared by the secretariat entitled *A digital path for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean* (agenda item 4)

11. Presenting the position paper *A digital path for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC described a complex global scenario marked by the economic crisis, the environmental emergency, migration and the technological revolution. He noted the importance of the digital transformation in facing those challenges and promoting a more sustainable development model, and said that digitalization was a source of value creation through digital data, knowledge and systems. The digitalization process was relevant to productive development policies in industrialized countries, and in the region, the pandemic had accelerated that process in a variety of areas (such as the productive sector, innovation and government services). Among the main connectivity challenges facing the region was the slow pace of adoption of digital technologies in traditional sectors, a digital skills deficit, the lag in the deployment of 5G networks and digital governance problems. The presentation ended with five recommendations to promote sustainable digitalization: (i) create enabling conditions, (ii) develop digital solutions, (iii) promote digital transformation (iv) establish digital governance and (v) strengthen cooperation and integration.

Panel discussions (agenda item 5)

*Panel 1: Latin America and the Caribbean in a digital world: investment, infrastructure and connectivity*

12. The panel was moderated by Jorge Negrete, President of the Digital Policy & Law Group, and the panellists were Walter Verri, Acting Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay; Fernando Saguier, Minister of Information and Communications Technologies of Paraguay; Maria Estella Dantas, Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Communications of Brazil; Orlando Vega, Vice-Minister of Telecommunications of the Ministry of Science, Innovation, Technology and Telecommunications (MICITT) of Costa Rica; Félix Fernández-Shaw, Director for Latin America and the Caribbean and Relations with all Overseas Countries and Territories of the Directorate-General for International Partnerships of the European Commission; and Anna Terrón, Director of the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIAPP).

13. During the panel, it was recognized that digital technology could accelerate human progress, facilitate access to information and solve complex problems in areas that were critical for development, such as health and education. Experiences were shared on the strategies that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean were implementing to promote access to digital technologies and their use and on the investments being made in connectivity. There were gaps with respect to the most advanced countries in terms of investment in telecommunications, and it was critical to make progress in narrowing the digital divide and roll out new technologies, including 5G technology. The complementarity between the digital agendas of Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe was important and would help to strengthen cooperation on the design and implementation of connectivity plans and regulatory frameworks.

*Panel 2: Towards a regional digital market: governance and regulation in spaces for trade and production integration*

14. The panel was moderated by Mario Castillo, Officer-in-Charge of the Division of Production, Productivity and Management of ECLAC, and the panellists included Maryleana Méndez Jiménez, Secretary General of the Inter-American Association of Telecommunications Operators (ASIET); Nigel Cassimire, Deputy Secretary General of the Caribbean Telecommunications Union; Mercedes Aramendía, President of the Regulatory Unit of Communications Services (URSEC) of Uruguay; Rodrigo da Costa Serran, Head of the Department of Physical and Digital Integration of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA); and Diego Caicedo, Director General of the General Secretariat of the Andean Community (CAN).

15. The panellists highlighted the potential of a regional digital market to facilitate trade in digital goods and services and thus to incentivize investment and the development of services, applications and innovations. This was not only a matter of eliminating cross-border barriers and reducing transaction costs but also of boosting the benefit of digital technologies, building greater trust so that companies and individuals could participate in the digital economy. They shared some experiences of attempts to promote coordinated efforts and initiatives on digital topics between various regional integration blocs (CAN, LAIA, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Caribbean Telecommunications Union). Participants underscored the need to guarantee affordable, high-quality Internet connectivity for the entire population in order to close persistent territorial, age, gender and other gaps in the region. They also emphasized the crucial role played by digital technologies in fostering women's economic autonomy and in the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

*Panel 3: Innovation, entrepreneurship and the digital transformation: triggers and catalysts for development*

16. The panel was moderated by Guillermo Anlló, Regional Specialist of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the panellists were Raúl Katz, Director of Business Strategy Research at Columbia University and President of Telecom Advisory Services (TAS); Oscar Robles, Chief Executive Officer of the Latin American and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry (LACNIC); Enrique Topolansky, Professor at the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) of Universidad ORT of Uruguay; Amilcar Perea, Secretary General of the Uruguayan Chamber of Information Technologies (CUTI); and Christian Castello, Manager of Solutions Architecture for South America of Amazon Web Services (AWS).

17. During the session, panellists highlighted the potential of innovation and digitalization to accelerate development in the region, while also cautioning that their impact would depend on eliminating certain institutional barriers related to gaps in coordination and the absence of vertical and horizontal policy consistency. Promoting the effective use of emerging digital technologies was key to boosting productivity and growth, especially in the domain of the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, the blockchain, virtualization and environmentally friendly technologies. Panellists mentioned some relevant experiences relating to policies and instruments to incentivize the digital transformation of production, including the promotion of productive capacities, financing mechanisms, capacity-building, technical assistance and support for companies to gain access to and adopt technologies, among others.

*Panel 4: Digitalization for greater inclusion: closing gaps and boosting economic autonomy*

18. The panel was moderated by Lucía Scuro, Economic Affairs Officer of the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC, and the panellists were Hilda Patricia Polanco, member of the Board of Directors of the

Dominican Telecommunications Institute (INDOTEL); Magdalena Furtado, Programme Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); Lucas Gallitto, Head of GSMA Latin America; Vagner Diniz, Manager of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C); Ximena Órdenes, Senator, Chile; and Sebastián Bellagamba, Vice-President of External Engagement, Internet Society.

19. The panellists emphasized that there were significant inequalities in Internet access among the countries of the region and stressed the importance of ensuring that the population take ownership of technological knowledge. Many people remained unaware of the possibilities of the Internet, as shown by the fact that although 95% of the inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean had broadband mobile coverage, only 50% were using it. Local production of digital technology was nearly non-existent and import tariffs were very high, representing a significant barrier for access to devices. The pandemic had brought to light the digital divide in the region and boosting Internet access in the most remote and densely populated areas was key. The government could not be the only stakeholder working on that initiative; the private sector must also participate. Otherwise, the divides would continue to widen, especially for certain groups of vulnerable persons or those with disabilities.

*Panel 5: The job market and employment: skills and competencies for societies that are transforming*

20. The panel was moderated by Sebastián Rovira, Economic Affairs Officer of the Division of Production, Productivity and Management of ECLAC, and the panellists were Fiorella Haim, General Manager at Plan Ceibal, Uruguay; Luis Eliécer Cardenas, Executive Director of RedCLARA; Mario Coronado, Director of Public Affairs for Telefónica Hispanoamérica; Daniel Pérez, National Director of Employment at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Uruguay; and Rodrigo Filgueira, Specialist in Digitalization and Vocational Training of the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

21. The experiences of Plan Ceibal in Uruguay, which had been particularly successful during the pandemic, were shared during the panel session. The need to provide dedicated educational support for digital transformation was also highlighted, which could be pivotal in terms of human capital formation and in the development of digital skills that would be recognized and validated across the region. Mention was also made of the gender gap that persisted in certain sectors, such as the telecommunications industry, where most technicians were men. It was crucial to teach not only technical skills but also digital content creation, and the region had a great opportunity to develop skills and competencies that would boost productive and technological development. However, to achieve this, policies and regulations would need to be designed and implemented to modernize education systems and foster new types of work.

*Panel 6: Cybersecurity and critical assets*

22. This panel was moderated by Mauricio Papaleo, Data Security Manager at the National Agency for e-Government and the Information Society (AGESIC) of Uruguay, and the panellists were Jorge Mora, Expert with the EU CyberNet project of the European Union; Rodrigo de la Parra, Vice-President for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN); Carolina A. Rossini, Director of Partnerships and Research for the Datasphere Initiative; Alfonso Jiménez, Latin America Strategy and Marketing Director of Huawei Cloud; Carlos González, Coordinator of Grupo de Ciberseguridad de las Redes de Investigación y Educación de Latinoamérica and Service Manager at RedCLARA; and Andrés Piazza, Director of the Institute of Digital Development for Latin America and the Caribbean (IDD LAC).

23. Panellists in the session discussed the importance of cybersecurity for driving digital transformation and concluded that policies and strategies were needed in that regard, as well as institutional and regulatory frameworks consistent with international recommendations and standards. They stressed the need for countries to design mechanisms to enhance capacities and to have spaces for regional and international coordination and cooperation for information-sharing and public-private coordination. The challenges were considerable and ranged from protecting data and critical infrastructure to creating and strengthening response teams for computing-related emergencies to designing cybersecurity strategies. Lastly, they urged all stakeholders to work together to build capacities and cooperate on cybersecurity, a critical issue for digital transformation in the region.

*Panel 7: The importance of tracking progress in digitalization: a digital development observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean*

24. The panel was moderated by Alejandro Patiño, Economic Affairs Officer with the Innovation and New Technologies Unit of the Division of Production, Productivity and Management of ECLAC, and the panellists were Alexandre Barbosa, Manager of the Regional Centre of Studies for the Development of the Information Society (CETIC.br) of Brazil; Diego Aboal, Technical Director of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Uruguay; Salma Jalife, Chief Executive Officer of Centro México Digital; Nathalia Foditsch, digital specialist; Claudio Araya San Martín, Undersecretary for Telecommunications of the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications of Chile; and Nanno Mulder, Chief of the Sustainable Trade Unit, International Trade and Integration Division of ECLAC.

25. The panellists noted the need to advance in the generation of indicators and metrics to measure the digital divide and underscored the mixed situation of countries in terms of the production of ICT statistics and their quality. The multiple-stakeholder governance model used by CETIC.br in Brazil was mentioned as a good practice, in which statistical processes were coordinated with different public stakeholders but also with private sector experts and representatives. The experience of cooperation in Uruguay in that regard was also highlighted, where AGESIC and the National Statistical Office worked together to produce ICT data. In Mexico, Centro México Digital published the State digital development index through a participatory process involving stakeholders from the public and private sectors and academia. Panellists noted the need to recognize and update the concept of effective connectivity to include aspects on affordability and quality in the metrics for Internet access and use, as well as some of the limitations to quantifying e-commerce, in particular cross-border e-commerce.

*Panel 8: Agritech in Latin America and the Caribbean: sectoral digital agendas and regional experiences*

26. The panel was moderated by Octavio Sotomayor, Economic Affairs Officer with the Agriculture and Biodiversity Unit of the Natural Resources Division of ECLAC, and the panellists were Sibelle de Andrade Silva, Director of the Department for Agricultural Innovation Support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply of Brazil; Francine Brossard, Executive Director of the Agrarian Innovation Foundation (FIA) of Chile; Jaime Cortés, Professor of Social Communication at Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, Colombia; Vanessa Rojas, Project Manager at the Costa Rica Coffee Institute (ICAFE); and Miguel Sierra, Director of Innovation and Communications at the National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIA) of Uruguay.

27. Representatives who participated in the session shared a variety of national and local experiences relating to policies for digital transformation in the agriculture industry, and said that it was urgent both to expand such policies, with a focus on rural areas, and to strengthen public-private partnerships and encourage research and innovation on digital solutions for the sector. They emphasized some of the barriers

to the transformation of the industry, including a lack of Internet coverage and poor-quality connections in rural areas. In that regard, to design effective policies, there was a need to consider issues at the sector, company and territory levels. Panellists described experiences with developing digital agendas for the agricultural sector, in particular in Brazil, and specific programmes in Colombia, Costa Rica and Uruguay.

*Panel 9: Digital commerce and SMEs: opportunities for improving regional competitiveness*

28. The panel discussion was moderated by Raúl Echeberría, Executive Director of the Latin American Internet Association (ALAI); the panellists were Guillermo Varela, President of the Chamber of the Digital Economy of Uruguay (CEDU); Susana Pecoy, National Industries Director of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay; Salvador Bonilla Ibáñez, Adviser in the Investment, Services and Digital Economy Division of the Undersecretariat for International Economic Relations of Chile; Daniel Cavalcanti, General Coordinator of Public Policies for Telecommunications Services of the Ministry of Communications of Brazil; Eleonora Rabinovich, Senior Manager of Public Policy and Government Affairs of Google; and Matías Fernández, Senior Manager of Public Affairs of Mercado Libre.

29. During the discussion, panellists highlighted the impact of the pandemic on the digitalization of companies, given that the physical distancing measures imposed had obliged much of the productive sector to accelerate the digitalization process in order to survive. Prioritizing the digital transformation of companies in the public agendas of the region was critical to improve competitiveness and the capacity for internationalization, in particular for smaller companies, in order to advance in the establishment of a regional digital market. To take advantage of the technology revolution under way, the digital transformation of the productive sector must be encouraged through the use of a variety of means, including capacity-building, the development of financing mechanisms, access to technology and its adoption and e-commerce tools.

*Panel 10: The green transition in a digital world*

30. The panel was moderated by Sebastián Rovira, Economic Affairs Officer of the Division of Production, Productivity and Management of ECLAC, and the panellists included Laura Lacuague, Coordinator of the Environmental Unit of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay; Sebastián Nieto Parra, Head of the Latin America and the Caribbean Unit at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Centre; Mauricio Agudelo, Senior Specialist at the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF); and Claudio Maggi, Strategic Affairs Manager of the Production Development Corporation (CORFO) of Chile.

31. This panel sought to delve more deeply into an analysis of industrial policy and digital policies and the role of innovation in supporting productive innovation processes. Recalling the opportunities presented by the digital transition and the green transition, panellists underscored some of the challenges that the region faced in advancing towards a green and just digital transition, in particular the lack of funding, unequal access to technologies and the need to promote productive capacities and skills. Latin America and the Caribbean needed some US\$ 77 billion dollars to address climate change, and it would be key to mobilize private investment in transport, energy, and systems for integrated water resource management, as well as to strengthen green institutional frameworks. It was also stressed that there was a need for action on in certain areas in the region, such as transport, the energy transition, agriculture, cities, and waste and circularity.

*Panel 11: Smart cities: new spaces for innovation and development*

32. The moderator of the panel was Mariana Rodríguez Zani, Chief Executive Officer of Convergencia Research and Convergencialatina, and the panellists were Sebastián Cabello, Chief Executive Officer of SmC+; Javier Altszyler, Director General of digital channels for Buenos Aires; Jorge Pérez, Director General of Technology Operations at the Digital Public Innovation Agency of the Government of Mexico City; and Alfie Ulloa, Chief Executive Officer of the Chilean Telecommunications Association (Chile Telcos).

33. This panel session focused on aspects of policies related to smart cities, institutional design and connectivity levels in Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Bogotá and São Paulo. Panellists discussed how technology could contribute to addressing a number of urban challenges in city environments and the inequalities between large cities in the region and smaller ones. Differences were also seen within cities, in particular between central and peripheral areas, and government action was therefore required to close the gaps and promote access to technology. The lack of budgetary resources for innovation, changes to organizational culture, administrative and legal barriers and a lack of human resources were some of the challenges facing cities in the implementation of digital technology policies. In closing, panellists raised the alarm regarding a significant problem facing some cities: the theft of cables and network equipment, which meant that action must be taken on the legal front and to safeguard infrastructure.

*Panel 12: Digital government and citizen participation*

34. The panel was moderated by Valeria Torres, Officer-in-Charge of the Public Management and Open Government Area of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), and the panellists were Luukas Ilves, Undersecretary for Digital Transformation of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of Estonia (virtual); Marushka Chocobar, Secretary of Digital Government and Digital Transformation in the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers of Peru (virtual); Pedro Quezada, Director of the Government Office for Information and Communications Technologies (OGTIC) of the Dominican Republic; Virginia Pardo, Director for the Information Society of the National Agency for e-Government and the Information Society (AGESIC) of Uruguay; and Ana Carina Rodríguez, Undersecretary for the Services and Digital Country Department of the Ministry of Public Innovation of the Head Office of the Cabinet of Ministers of Argentina.

35. During this session, panellists said that digital governance should provide strategic guidance for execution, and that citizen participation was crucial in that regard. The experience of Estonia, where government was distinct from digital governance and the latter was focused on services, was shared. Thanks to government leadership, digital signatures were increasingly being used in Estonia and the necessary structures were in place for both public and private services to be offered digitally. Although data management was a key issue for the country, it was believed that not all data should be open and public. There was a huge opportunity in Latin America and the Caribbean to continue advancing in digital governance, but better coordination and citizen participation were required in policymaking and in building capacities and skills. In closing, a representative of ECLAC unveiled a digital repository with information on digital governance.

36. The Undersecretary for the Services and Digital Country Department of Argentina said that citizens had a central role to play in public policymaking and the importance of meeting citizens' requirements. In this respect, experiences from Argentina included the chatbot TINA, the application Mi Argentina and the international COVID-19 international credential. The State needed to be empathetic, efficient, involved and transparent and to support such processes, while contributing to closing connectivity, gender and disability

gaps, among others. Open data portals were also important, and citizens needed to have the skills to handle the data provided by the State, which should be for the entire public and not solely for specialized persons.

Consideration and adoption of the proposed digital agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024) and the draft Montevideo Declaration (agenda item 7)

37. The countries participating in the eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024)<sup>2</sup> and the Montevideo Declaration, “Building together in the digital age”, which are set out in annexes 1 and 2, respectively, of the present report.

*Panel 13: Panel discussion: cooperation and strategic partnerships for a new digitalization*

38. The moderator of the panel discussion was Luis Yáñez, Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the panellists were Hebert Paguas, Executive Director of the National Agency for e-Government and the Information Society (AGESIC) of Uruguay; Lucía Scuro, Economic Affairs Officer of the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC; Jorge Srur, South Regional Manager of the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF); Félix Fernández-Shaw, Director for Latin America and the Caribbean and Relations with all Overseas Countries and Territories of the Directorate-General for International Partnerships of the European Commission; Sergio Abreu, Secretary General of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA); Federico Bonaglia, Deputy Director of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Centre; and Claudio Araya San Martín, Undersecretary for Telecommunications of the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications of Chile.

39. During the panel discussion, it was noted that, to some degree, to speak of international cooperation was to speak of digital transformation, and some examples were given (such as the COVID-19 passport and cross-border signatures), which brought the human dimension into both topics and defined the path that the region must take, collaboratively and cooperatively, as a group. A multiple-stakeholder approach was important for that kind of cooperation, of which the ultimate goal was sustainable development. The pandemic had brought to light common problems at the global level, and with regard to the digital agenda, there were challenges and opportunities in Latin America that were similar to those of other regions. It was important to recall that having a digital agenda would contribute to livelihoods in the countries of the region and that digital coordination implied that every person was part of the information society ecosystem. Partnerships should be forged not only between the countries of the region but also between regions.

40. Similarities between the digital agenda that had been adopted and that of the European Union created ample space for collaboration between the two regions. A digital partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean was being developed and there was a great need for investment, technology and training. All countries were facing the digital challenge, and in that regard, regional convergence was fundamental. There was a need to reduce intraregional asymmetries, work on social inclusion, define road maps, act in a coordinated manner and contribute to the common agenda. Infrastructure and access remained the main problems in the region and the greatest mistake that could be made was for each country to create its plan individually. The system had progressed from cooperation to partnerships, in which decisions on goals and how to achieve them would be forged together. It was essential to set aside the aid agenda and adopt an agenda based on quality investment, with clearly defined goals.

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<sup>2</sup> LC/CMSI.8/5.



## Annex 1

**DIGITAL AGENDA FOR LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN (eLAC2024)****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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> Goal 9 and target 9c.

Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024) includes 31 goals grouped in four pillars, which all incorporate the gender perspective.<sup>2</sup>

## **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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

### 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 <sup>a</sup>
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 <sup>b</sup>

<b>Targets for 2024</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
5% biennial increase in e-commerce companies	20.5% (2018)	Percentage of companies that receive orders online
40% of the population has basic digital skills	30% (2020)	Percentage of the population with basic digital skills <sup>a</sup>
10% of the population has advanced digital skills	5% (2020)	Percentage of the population with advanced digital skills <sup>a</sup>
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.

<sup>a</sup> Disaggregated by sex.

<sup>b</sup> Disaggregated by type of service.

## Annex 2

**MONTEVIDEO DECLARATION****“Building together in the digital age”**

*We, the representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Montevideo, from 16 to 18 November 2022, on the occasion of the eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, by which the Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their targets,

*Reiterating* the principles and objectives agreed at the World Summit on the Information Society, held in two phases, the first in Geneva in 2003 and the second in Tunis in 2005, to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society and harness the potential of knowledge and of information and communication technology to promote sustainable development,

*Considering* General Assembly resolution 70/125 of 16 December 2015 on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, requesting that a high-level meeting be held in 2025,

*Taking into account* the recommendations of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to make better use of the opportunities offered by digital technologies, as set out in the reports of the Secretary-General entitled *Road map for digital cooperation: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation*<sup>1</sup> and *Our Common Agenda*,<sup>2</sup> the latter of which proposes holding a Summit of the Future—planned for September 2023—during which a Global Digital Compact would be agreed, with shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all.

*Recalling* that the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2022) was adopted by the countries of the region at the seventh Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean,

*Recalling also* resolution 761(XXXIX) adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-ninth session, held in Buenos Aires from 24 to 26 October 2022, which called upon all member States of the Commission participate in the eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean,

*Mindful* of the importance that the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2022) has had in promoting cooperation and regional integration in digital matters, facilitating dialogue, sharing of experiences, research, capacity-building and measurement in the digital sphere,

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<sup>1</sup> A/74/821.

<sup>2</sup> A/75/982.

*Emphasizing* that digital technologies have been essential for economic resilience and for mitigating the effects of movement restrictions and lockdowns during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

*Recognizing* that effective, affordable, quality broadband connectivity for all is a cornerstone of greater social inclusion and less inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean,

*Stressing* the importance of developing the digital skills and capacities of all persons, so that they benefit from the new digital revolution and drive the economic and social transformation of Latin American and Caribbean countries,

*Highlighting* the need to strengthen institutional frameworks and provide resources to the entities responsible for the design, implementation, follow-up and sustainability of digital transformation policies, agendas and plans in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean,

*Recognizing* that the digital economy, innovation and digital entrepreneurship are crucial components of the transformation of Latin American and Caribbean countries' development model,

*Emphasizing* that statistical measurement and harmonization processes must be strengthened with regard to the digital sphere, to foster evidence-based policymaking in Latin America and the Caribbean,

*Recognizing* the need to promote the use and appropriation of emerging technologies to harness the potential of the technological revolution and enhance its impact on the economy, society and sustainability,

*Stressing* the importance of promoting digital transformation of strategic sectors such as agriculture, health, manufacturing, commerce, tourism and mobility, to contribute to improved innovation, productivity and competitiveness and to reduce environmental impacts,

*Recognizing* the importance of pursuing regional cooperation processes and partnerships in digital matters, to inspire the fundamental principles and values of solidarity and inclusion, freedom, participation, security and sustainability in the digital transformation of Latin America and the Caribbean,

*Stressing* the importance of continuing to support the construction of a regional digital market in which administrative barriers and transaction costs are reduced, to encourage cross-border e-commerce and growth in the region's digital economy,

*Highlighting* the importance of having an up-to-date legal and regulatory framework that guarantees legal certainty, trust and the protection of people's rights in the digital environment,

*Underscoring* the need to promote cybersecurity to build trust in digital media through policies, strategies and regulatory frameworks that are consistent with international standards and the protection of human rights,

*Resolve to*

1. *Adopt* the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024);
2. *Continue* strengthening regional cooperation activities in digital matters within the framework of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean by formulating a programme of cooperation

activities for the 2022–2024 period, facilitating dialogue, sharing of experiences, knowledge management and capacity-building;

3. *Recognize* the participation and work of regional and international entities and organizations from the private sector, civil society, the technical community and development banks in the construction of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024) and invite them to participate actively in implementation of the Conference’s agreements;

4. *Also recognize* the leadership of the Government of Ecuador as Chair of the Presiding Officers and its coordination of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean over the 2020–2022 period;

5. *Further recognize* the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as technical secretariat of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean and its vital importance for the continuity of the process;

6. *Thank* the people and the Government of Uruguay for hosting the eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean;

7. *Thank* the Government of Chile for offering to continue the process of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean and to host the ninth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2024.

## Annex 3

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS<sup>1</sup>****A. Estados miembros de la Comisión/Member States of the Commission****ARGENTINA**Representante/Representative:

- Ana Carina Rodríguez, Subsecretaria de Servicios y País Digital, Secretaría de Innovación Pública, email: rodriguez@jefatura.gob.ar

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Marisol Argüello, Secretaria de Embajada y Cónsul de Segunda Clase, Embajada de la Argentina en el Uruguay, email: arw@mrecic.gov.ar
- Javier Altszyler, Director General de Canales Digitales, Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, email: jaltszyler@buenosaires.gob.ar

**BOLIVIA (ESTADO PLURINACIONAL DE)/BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)**Representante/Representative:

- Vladimir Terán Gutiérrez, Director General Ejecutivo, Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación (AGETIC), email: vladimir.teran@agetic.gob.bo

Miembro de la delegación/Delegation member:

- Elmer Esteban Catarina Mamani, Embajador del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia en el Uruguay, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

**BRASIL/BRAZIL**Representante/Representative:

- Maria Estella Dantas Antonichelli, Secretaria Ejecutiva, Ministerio de Comunicaciones, email: estella.dantas@mcom.gov.br

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Tatiana Alarcon, Chefe da Assessoria Especial de Comunicação Social, Ministerio de Comunicaciones, email: graziela.caselli@itamaraty.gov.br
- Artur Coimbra de Oliveira, Consejero, Agencia Nacional de Telecomunicaciones (ANATEL), email: arturcoimbra@anatel.gov.br
- Tawfic Awwad Júnior, Superintendente Sustituto, Asesor, Agencia Nacional de Telecomunicaciones (ANATEL), email: tawfic@anatel.gov.br

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<sup>1</sup> Los datos de esta lista son los suministrados por los participantes en el registro correspondiente que se habilitó para la reunión. The information contained in this list is as supplied by the participants themselves, in the register provided for the meeting.

- Daniel Brandão Cavalcanti, Coordinador General de Políticas Públicas para Servicios de Comunicaciones, Ministerio de Comunicaciones, email: daniel.cavalcanti@mcom.gov.br
- Renato Barreto dos Santos, Oficial de Seguridad Institucional, Presidencia de la República, email: renato.santos@presidencia.gov.br
- Alexandre Fernandes Barbosa, Gerente, Centro Regional de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Sociedad de la Información (Cetic.br), email: alexandre@nic.br
- Nádilla Tsuruda, Coordinadora de Procesos y Calidad, Centro Regional de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Sociedad de la Información (Cetic.br), email: nadilla@nic.br
- Ana Laura Martínez Tessore, Coordinadora de Cooperación Regional, Centro Regional de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Sociedad de la Información (Cetic.br), email: analaura@nic.br
- Eduardo Freitas de Oliveira, Delegación Permanente del Brasil ante la ALADI y el MERCOSUR, email: dtd@itamary.gov.br
- Graziela Rodrigues Caselli, División de Asuntos Digitales, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, email: graziela.caselli@itamary.gov.br

## CHILE

### Representante/Representative:

- Claudio Araya San Martín, Subsecretario de Telecomunicaciones, Subsecretaría de Telecomunicaciones (SUBTEL), email: caraya@subtel.gob.cl

### Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Ximena Órdenes, Senadora, Senado de la República de Chile, email: xordenes@senado.cl
- Francine Brossard, Directora Ejecutiva, Fundación para la Innovación Agraria (FIA), email: fbrossard@fia.cl
- Claudio Maggi Campos, Gerente de Asuntos Estratégicos, Corporación de Fomento de la Producción (CORFO), email: claudio.maggi@corfo.cl
- Salvador Bonilla, Asesor, Subsecretaría de Relaciones Económicas Internacionales, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, email: jbonilla@subrei.gob.cl
- Marcelo Rute, Jefe, Fondo de Desarrollo de las Telecomunicaciones, Subsecretaría de Telecomunicaciones (SUBTEL), email: mrute@subtel.gob.cl
- Juan Pablo Vial, Coordinador de Políticas Digitales, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, email: jvialp@minrel.gob.cl

## COSTA RICA

### Representante/Representative:

- Orlando Vega Quesada, Viceministro de Telecomunicaciones, Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación, Tecnología y Telecomunicaciones, email: orlando.vega@micitt.go.cr

## ECUADOR

### Representante/Representative:

- Antuan Barquet, Asesor Ministerial, Ministerio de Telecomunicaciones y de la Sociedad de la Información, email: antuan.barquet@mintel.gob.ec

## **EL SALVADOR**

### Representante/Representative:

- Ricardo Méndez, Especialista, Secretaría de Innovación de la Presidencia, email: ramendez@presidencia.gob.sv

## **GUATEMALA**

### Representante/Representative:

- Carlos Leonel Rojas, Gerente de Regulación de Telefonía, Superintendencia de Telecomunicaciones (SIT), email: carlos.rojas@sit.gob.gt

### Miembro de la delegación/Delegation member:

- Williams Córdón Loyo, Embajador de Guatemala en el Uruguay

## **HONDURAS**

### Representante/Representative:

- José Antonio Morales Cruz, Comisionado Propietario, Comisión Nacional de Telecomunicaciones (CONATEL), email: jose.morales@conatel.gob.hn

## **PANAMÁ/PANAMA**

### Representante/Representative:

- Luz Divina Arredondo, Ministra Consejera, Embajada de Panamá en el Uruguay, email: larredondo@mire.gob.pa

### Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Sandra Solís, Agregada, Embajada de Panamá en el Uruguay, email: ssolis@mire.gob.pa
- Robinson Zapata, Embajada de Panamá en el Uruguay

## **PARAGUAY**

### Representante/Representative:

- Fernando Sagüier, Ministro de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación, email: mmignaco@mitic.gov.py

### Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Astrid Sanz, Directora General de Innovación Productiva y Economía Digital, Ministerio de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación, email: asanz@mitic.gov.py
- María Inés Mignaco, Directora del Programa de Apoyo a la Agenda Digital, Ministerio de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación, email: mmignaco@mitic.gov.py

## **REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA/DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

### Representante/Representative:

- Pedro Antonio Quezada Cepeda, Director General, Oficina Gubernamental de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación, email: pedro.quezada@ogtic.gob.do

Miembro de la delegación/Delegation member:

- Hilda Patricia De San Martín Polanco Morales, Miembro del Consejo Directivo, Instituto Dominicano de las Telecomunicaciones (INDOTEL), email: hpolanco@indotel.gob.do

**URUGUAY**Representante/Representative:

- Hebert Paguas, Director Ejecutivo, Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC), Presidencia de la República, email: hebert.paguas@agesic.gub.uy

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Rodrigo Ferrés, Prosecretario de la Presidencia, email: comunicacion@presidencia.gub.uy
- Walter Verri, Ministro interino de Industria, Energía y Minería, email: subsecretario@miem.gub.uy
- Mercedes Aramendía, Presidenta, Unidad Reguladora de Servicios de Comunicaciones (URSEC), email: maramendia@ursec.gub.uy
- Celeste Elhordoy, Responsable de Relaciones Internacionales, Ministerio de Industria, Energía y Minería, email: celeste.elhordoy@miem.gub.uy
- María Laura Lacuague Pérez, Coordinadora Conjunta, Unidad Ambiental; Asesora, Ministerio de Industria, Energía y Minería, email: laura.lacuague@miem.gub.uy
- Guillermo Lugo, Director de TI, Dirección Nacional de Identificación Civil (DNIC), email: glugo@dnic.gub.uy
- Virginia Pardo, Directora de Sociedad de la Información, Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC), email: virginia.pardo@agesic.gub.uy
- Laura Amado, Encargada de Relaciónamiento Internacional, Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC), email: laura.amado@agesic.gub.uy
- Susana Dornel, Coordinadora de la Agenda Digital, Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC), email: susana.dornel@agesic.gub.uy
- Luciana Haller, Consultora de Gestión Estratégica, Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC), email: luciana.haller@agesic.gub.uy
- María Sofía Mascari, Tercera Secretaria, Dirección de Asuntos Multilaterales, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, email: sofia.mascari@mrree.gub.uy
- Juan Carlos Sandín, Director, Área de Acceso a TICs y Atención Ciudadana, Intendencia Departamental de Rivera, email: jcsandin@rivera.gub.uy
- Ignacio Velazco, Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC), email: ignacio.velazco@agesic.gub.uy

**B. Secretaría de las Naciones Unidas/United Nations Secretariat****Coordinadores Residentes/Resident Coordinators**

- Pablo Ruiz Hiebra, Coordinador Residente en el Uruguay, email: pablo.ruizhiebra@un.org

**C. Sistema de las Naciones Unidas/United Nations system****Banco Mundial/World Bank**

- Silvana Kostenbaum, Especialista Superior en Sector Público, email: skostenbaum@worldbank.org

**Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres (ONU- Mujeres)/United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN- Women)**

- Magdalena Furtado, Directora de Programas, email: magdalena.furtado@unwomen.org

**Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO)/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

- Guillermo Anlló, Especialista Regional del Programa Políticas de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación, email: g.anllo@unesco.org
- Eleonora Lamm, Regional Adviser, email: e.lamm@unesco.org

**Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)/International Labour Organization (ILO)**

- Rodrigo Filgueira, Especialista en Digitalización y Formación Profesional, Centro Interamericano para el Desarrollo del Conocimiento en la Formación Profesional (CINTERFOR), email: filgueira@ilo.org

**Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

- Alfonso Fernández de Castro, Representante Residente del PNUD en el Uruguay, email:
- Magdalena Preve, Analista de Programa, email: magdalena.preve@undp.org

**D. Organizaciones intergubernamentales/Intergovernmental organizations**

**Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI)/Latin American Integration Association (LAIA)**

- Sergio Abreu, Secretario General
- Rodrigo da Costa Serran, Jefe, Departamento de Integración Física y Digital, email: rserran@aladi.org
- Sabina Barone, Técnica, Uruguay, email: sbarone@aladi.org

**Unión de Telecomunicaciones del Caribe/Caribbean Telecommunications Union**

- Nigel Cassimire, Deputy Secretary General, email: nigel.cassimire@ctu.int

**Comunidad Andina (CAN)/Andean Community**

- Diego Fernando Caicedo Pinoargote, Director General, Secretaría General, email: dcaicedo@comunidadandina.org

**Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP)/International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP)**

- Anna Terrón, Directora, email: javier.ramia@fiiapp.es

**Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA)/Organization of American States (OAS)**

- Claudia Barrientos, Representante en el Uruguay, email: oasuruguay@oas.org

### **Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económicos (OCDE)/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

- Federico Bonaglia, Director Adjunto, Centro de Desarrollo, email: federico.bonaglia@oecd.org
- Sebastián Nieto Parra, Jefe para América Latina y el Caribe, Centro de Desarrollo, email: sebastian.nietoparra@oecd.org

### **Unión Europea/European Union**

- Félix Fernández-Shaw, Director para América Latina y el Caribe y Relaciones con los Territorios y Países de Ultramar, Dirección General de Asociaciones Internacionales, Comisión Europea, email: felix.fernandez-shaw@ec.europa.eu
- Emma Clua, Jefa de Unidad, email: emma.clua@ec.europa.eu
- Paolo Berizzi, Embajador en el Uruguay, email: pavlina.paglieri@eeas.europa.eu
- Markus Handke, Head of Cooperation, Uruguay, email: markus.handke@eeas.europa.eu
- Stefano La Terra Bella, Policy Officer, email: stefano.la-terra-bella@ec.europa.eu

### **E. Agencias de cooperación, bancos de desarrollo e instituciones financieras/ Cooperation agencies, development banks and financial institutions**

- Romina Laumann, Asesora, Coordinadora de Proyectos de Transformación Digital en cooperación con CEPAL, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- Leonie Kellerhof, Asesora, Centros de Transformación Digital, Programa Global de BMZ/GIZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- Carmen de Diego Fonseca, Responsable de Programas CTI, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECID), email: carmen.diego@aecid.es
- Óscar Muñoz Alcalá, Responsable de Programas, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECID), email: oscar.munoz@aecid.es
- José Luis Pimentel, Coordinador General de la Cooperación Española en el Cono Sur, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECID), email: jose.pimentel@aecid.es
- Blanca Rodríguez Torrego, Responsable de Programas, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECID), email: blanca.rodriguez@aecid.es
- Casilda Echevarría, Presidente, Banco Hipotecario del Uruguay, email: casildacep@yahoo.com.ar
- Jorge Srur, Gerente Regional Sur, Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF), email: paraguay@caf.com
- Ignacio Corlazzoli Hughes, Gerente para Europa, Medio Oriente y Asia, Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF), email: icorlazzoli@caf.com
- Eduardo Chomalí, Ejecutivo Principal de Transformación Digital, Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF), email: echomali@caf.com
- Mauricio Agudelo, Especialista Senior, Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF), email: eagudelo@caf.com
- Enrique Zapata, Ejecutivo Principal, Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF), email: ezapatab@caf.com

## F. Sector académico/Academia

- Nikolay Aguirre, Rector, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: nikolay.aguirre@unl.edu.ec
- Paola Arellano, Directora Ejecutiva, Red Universitaria Nacional (REUNA), Chile, email: direccion.ejecutiva@reuna.cl
- Yosmer Arellán Zurita, Asesor, EvidenciaVe, República Bolivariana de Venezuela, email: yosmer@gmail.com
- Ana Gabriela Astudillo Pesántez, Gestora de proyectos, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: gabriela.astudillo@cedia.org.ec
- Katina Bermeo, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador
- Eduardo Bertoni, Representante, Oficina Regional para América del Sur, Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, email: ebertoni@iidh.ed.cr
- Juan Pablo Carvallo, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: jpcarvallo@cedia.org.ec
- Carlos Casasús, Consejero, RedCLARA, México, email: ccasasus@cudi.edu.mx
- María Castelló, Profesora Agregada de Investigación, Instituto de Investigaciones Biológicas Clemente Estable, Uruguay, email: maritacastello@gmail.com
- Paulina Contardo, Estudiante, Universidad Diego Portales (UDP), Chile, email: paulina.contardo@mail.udp.cl
- Jaime Enrique Cortés Fandiño, Profesor e Investigador de Comunicación Social, Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios (Uniminuto), Colombia, email: jcortes@uniminuto.edu
- Miguel Mauricio Cueva Estrada, Docente, Universidad de Guayaquil, Ecuador, email: nathaelcueva@gmail.com
- María Irene Delgado, Responsable de Servicios y Comunidades, Red Universitaria Nacional (REUNA), Chile, email: mdelgado@reuna.cl
- Lorena del Pilar Donoso Abarca, Profesora Asociada, Universidad de Chile, Chile, email: ldonoso@uchile.cl
- Andrea Belén Figueroa Fariña, Uruguay, Estudiante de Abogacía, Facultad de Derecho, Universidad de la República, email: andreafigueroafarina@gmail.com
- Luis Furlán, Director, Centro de Estudios en Informática Aplicada, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala/RedCLARA, Guatemala, email: furlan@uvg.edu.gt
- Iván Gallardo Bernal, Profesor-Investigador, Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, México, email: igallardo@uagro.mx
- Ruben Gómez Sánchez Soto, Representante, Asamblea Universitaria, Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería, Perú, email: rgomezsanchez@ist-sac.com
- Diego González, Docente Asistente, Universidad de la República, Uruguay, email: dgonzalez@psico.edu.uy
- Israel Herrera Miranda, Docente, Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, México, email: 07086@uagro.mx
- Macarena Moya Huelmo, Estudiante, Facultad de Derecho, Universidad de la República, Uruguay, email: macarenamoya28@gmail.com
- Beatriz Juárez-Aguilar, Profesora, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México, email: ethesis3@yahoo.fr

- Raúl Katz, Director of Business Strategy Research, Columbia Institute for Tele-Information, Estados Unidos de América, email: raul.katz@teleadvs.com
- Ethel Kornecki, Adjunto, Cátedra Ciberseguridad, Universidad ORT, Uruguay, email: ethel.kornecki@fi365.ort.edu.uy
- Rosa Isabel Laguna Rivera, Estudiante de Maestría, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), México, email: is.lagunar@gmail.com
- Carlos Martínez Cedeño, Director, Evidencias VE, República Bolivariana de Venezuela, email: ccmcbest@gmail.com
- Marcelo Mautone, Profesor Asociado, - Universidad Tecnológica del Uruguay (UTEC), Uruguay, email: marcelo.mautone@utec.edu.uy
- Lidia Minchenkova, PhD Researcher, Departamento de Ciberseguridad, Universidad Bernardo O'Higgins, Chile, email: lidia.minchenkova@ubo.cl
- Juliana Murcia Flechas, Researcher at Latin American cultural institutions, Independent, Colombia, email: jumurci@gmail.com
- Carolina Olaya Alzate, Directora de Planeación y Evaluación Institucional, Universidad Católica de Manizales, Colombia, email: colaya@ucm.edu.co
- Manuel Podetti, Asesor de Comunicación y Docente, Universidad de la República, Uruguay, email: manuel.podetti@cse.udelar.edu.uy
- María Victoria Reyes, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: maria.reyes@ikiam.edu.ec
- Galia Rivas, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: galia.rivas@cedia.org.ec
- Ana Rivoir, Profesora Titular, Universidad de la República, Uruguay, email: anarivoir@gmail.com
- Wilfrido Robalino, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: wilfridorobalino@gmail.com
- María Carolina Sacoto, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: caro\_sacoto@hotmail.com
- Ignacio Sánchez González, Investigador Adjunto, Instituto de Estudios Internacionales, Universidad de Chile, Chile, email: ignacio.sanchez.g@uchile.cl
- Nelson Simões, Diretor-geral, Rede Nacional de Ensino e Pesquisa (RNP), Brasil, email: nelson.simoies@rnp.br
- Javier Toral, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: francisco.toral@cedia.org.ec
- Javier Valdiviezo, Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Investigación y la Academia (CEDIA), Ecuador, email: javier.valdiviezo@cedia.org.ec
- María José Viega Rodríguez, Profesora de Derecho Informático, Facultad de Derecho, Universidad de la República, Uruguay, email: mjviega@gmail.com

### **G. Sector privado/Private sector**

- Miguel Ángel Albán Villacís, Director Ejecutivo, Consorcio Hospitalario Ecuatoriano, Ecuador, email: malbanv@gmail.com
- Diogo Brunacci, Senior Director Government Affairs, Oracle Latinoamérica, Brasil, email: diogo.brunacci@oracle.com
- Sebastián Cabello, CEO, SmC+, Argentina, email: sebastian@smcplusconsulting.com

- Hernán Colombo, Gerente de Regulación y Negocio Mayorista, Telecom Argentina S.A., Argentina, email: hcolombo@teco.com.ar
- Mario Coronado, Director de Asuntos Públicos, Telefónica Hispanoamérica S.A., Perú, email: mario.coronado@telefonica.com
- Lucrecia Corvalán, Senior Policy Manager, GSMA, Argentina, email: lcorvalan@gsma.com
- Omar de León Boccia, Senior Consultant, Teleconsult, Uruguay, email: omar.deleon@teleconsult.us
- Miguel Droguett Meza, Jefe de Asuntos Públicos, WOM S.A., Chile, email: miguel.droguett@wom.cl
- Jaime Dupuy Ortiz de Zevallos, Gerente de Asuntos Legales y Regulatorios, Sociedad de Comercio Exterior del Perú (ComexPerú), Perú, email: jdupuy@comexperu.org.pe
- Raúl Carlos Echeberría González, Director Ejecutivo, Asociación Latinoamericana de Internet (ALAI), Uruguay, email: raul@alai.lat
- Matías Fernández Díaz, Gerente Senior, Mercado Libre, Argentina, email: matias.fernandez@mercadolibre.com
- César Funes, Public Affairs VP, Huawei LAC, México, email: cesar.funes@huawei.com
- Lucas Gallitto, Head of Latin America, GSMA, Argentina, email: lgallitto@gsma.com
- Pablo García de Castro, ASIET, Uruguay, email: pablog@tel.lat
- Alfonso Jiménez, Latin America Strategy and Marketing, HUAWEI, México, email: alfonso.jimenez.lara@huawei.com
- Mateo Martínez, CEO, Krav Maga Hacking, Uruguay, email: mmartinez@kmhcorp.com
- Rodrigo Martínez, Consultant, Tilsor, Uruguay, email: rmartinez@tilsor.com.uy
- Maryleana Méndez Jiménez, Secretaria General, Asociación Interamericana de Empresas de Telecomunicaciones (ASIET), Costa Rica, email: maryleana@tel.lat
- Virginia Nakagawa, Socia Senior, Nakagawa Consultores Regulatorios SAC, Perú, email: virginia@nakagawa.pe
- Jorge Fernando Negrete Pacheco, Presidente, Digital Policy & Law Group, México, email: jorgefernandonegrete@digitalpolicylaw.com
- Iris Palma, Directora Ejecutiva, Federación de Asociaciones de América Latina, el Caribe, España y Portugal de Entidades de Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación (ALETI), El Salvador, email: directora@aleti.org
- Marcelo Pino, Vicepresidente de Asuntos Corporativos Regional, Huawei Technologies, Chile, email: mpino@huawei.com
- Jorge León Quiroga Canaviri, Secretario Ejecutivo, FUNDETIC BOLIVIA, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, email: jquirogacanaviri@gmail.com
- Rodrigo Ramírez, Presidente, Cámara Chilena de Infraestructura Digital, Chile, email: rodrigo.ramirez@infraestructuradigital.cl
- Diego Rodríguez Beisso, Public Affairs Director, Huawei, Uruguay, email: diego.rodriguez.beisso@huawei.com
- Luis Sánchez, CEO, Kadabra IT, Uruguay, email: luis@kadabrait.net
- Michael Stanton, Cientista de Redes, Rede Nacional de Ensino e Pesquisa (RNP), Brasil, email: michael.stanton@rnp.br
- Luis Stevenazzi, Comercial / Innovación, Interfase SA / ISA Ltda., Uruguay, email: luis.stevenazzi@isaportal.uy
- Nádilla Tsuruda, Quality Managment Coordinator, Centro Regional de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Sociedad de la Información (Cetic.br), Núcleo de Informação e Coordenação do Ponto BR (NIC.br), Brasil, email: nadilla@nic.br
- Diego Urbina Fletcher, Gerente de Políticas Públicas, Amazon Web Services, Perú, email: diegouf@amazon.com

## H. Otros participantes/Other participants

- Claudio López, Jefe, Departamento Ciberdefensa, Ministerio de Defensa, Uruguay, email: claudio.lopez@mdn.gub.uy
- Tatiana Alarcon Gonçalves, Head of the Special Advisory for Social Communication, Ministry of Communications, Brasil, email: tatiana.alarcon@mcom.gov.br
- Rodrigo Ramírez, Director del Plan Nacional de Conectividad Digital Rural, Ministerio de Agricultura, Chile, email: rodrigoramirezpino@gmail.com
- Mauricio Umpierrez, Director de Tecnología de la Información y Comunicaciones, Instituto del Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay (INAU), Uruguay, email: mumpierrez@inau.gub.uy
- Victoria Alonso, Comunicación, Instituto de Promoción Económico Social del Uruguay (IPRU), Uruguay, email: victoria.alonso@ipru-uruguay.org
- Luis Arancibia, LACTLD, Chile, email: lam@nic.cl
- Sebastián Bellagamba, Vice-President External Engagement, Internet Society, Uruguay, email: bellagamba@isoc.org
- Juan Pablo Corlazzoli, Consejo Uruguayo para las Relaciones Internacionales (CURI), Uruguay, email: corlazzoli6@gmail.com
- Vladimir Cortés Roshdestvensky, Oficial del programa de derechos digitales Article 19 México y Centroamérica, México, email: vcortes@article19.org
- Gustavo Gómez, Director Ejecutivo, Observatorio Latinoamericano de Regulación, Medios y Convergencia (OBSERVACOM), Uruguay, email: direccion@observacom.org
- Clelia Hernández, Directora General, Nuevo León 4.0, México, email: clelia.hernandez@expertusmx.com
- José Luis Imain, Secretario Gremial, Gremio de Docentes e Investigadores de la UNT (GDIUNT), Argentina, email: jefaturageneral.it@gmail.com
- Salma Jalife, Presidenta, Centro México Digital, México, email: salma@centromexico.digital
- Mariuxy James, Ecuador, email: paski49@gmil.com
- Natalia Loungou, Events and Communications Coordinator, Datasphere Initiative, España, email: loungou@internetjurisdiction.net
- Adrián Marrero, Consultor de Ciberseguridad, Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC), Uruguay, email: adrian.marrero@agesic.gub.uy
- Antonio Medina Gómez, Presidente, Asociación Colombiana de Usuarios de Internet (ACUI), Colombia, email: amedinagomez@gmail.com
- Carlos Montepeque, Auditoría Operativa, Securitas Uruguay, Uruguay, email: cmontepeque@securitasuruguay.com
- Mirian Núñez Maidana, Presidente, Centro de Planificación y Estrategia (CEPE), Paraguay, email: cepepy@gmail.com
- Christian O'Flaherty, Regional Vice President, Internet Society, Argentina, email: oflaherty@isoc.org
- Andrea Palomino, Events and Communications Assistant, The Datasphere Initiative, Francia, email: palominoflores@internetjurisdiction.net
- Andres Piazza, Director, Instituto de Desarrollo Digital de Latinoamérica y el Caribe (IDD LAC), Argentina, email: apiazza@iddlac.org
- Marcelo Redon, Presidente, Cerrando la Brecha Asociación Civil, Argentina, email: marcelored@gmail.com
- Carolina Rossini, Cofundadora y Directora de Investigación, The Datasphere Initiative, Brasil, email: rossini@thedatasphere.org

- Claudio San Juan, Colaborador, Red Colaborativa de ITA-LAC, Argentina, email: claudioasj@gmail.com
- Fabrizio Scrollini, Director Ejecutivo, Iniciativa Latinoamericana por los Datos Abiertos (ILDA), Uruguay, email: fabrizio@idatosabiertos.org
- Fabio Storino, Analista de Informaciones, Centro Regional de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Sociedad de la Información (Cetic.br), Núcleo de Informação e Coordenação do Ponto BR (NIC.br), Brasil, email: fstorino@nic.br
- Luis Sergio Valle, Presidente Ejecutivo, FUNDETIC BOLIVIA, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, email: svalle@fundeticbolivia.org
- María Amieva, Directora, ECIIA Abogados, Argentina, email: camieva@ecija.com
- Miguel Ignacio Estrada, Gerente de Relaciones Estratégicas, Registro de Direcciones de Internet para América Latina y Caribe (LACNIC), email: ignacio@lacnic.net
- Mariana Rodríguez Zani, Grupo Convergencia, Argentina, email: rodriguezani@convergencia.com
- Vanessa Rojas Herrera, Gestora de Proyectos, Instituto del Café de Costa Rica (ICAFE), Costa Rica, email: vrojas@icafe.cr
- Sergio Bandinelli, TECNALIA Ventures, España, email: sergio.bandinelli@tecnalia.com
- Rodrigo Contreras, Agregado Comercial en Montevideo, Secretaría de Economía, México, email: repmex.montevideo@economia.gob.mx
- Rodrigo de la Parra, Vicepresidente para América Latina y el Caribe, Corporación para la Asignación de Nombres y Números en Internet (ICANN), email: rodrigo.delaparra@icann.org
- Andrés Aguayo, Director, Oficina de Tecnología de la Información, Organismo Supervisor de la Inversión Privada en Telecomunicaciones (OSIPTEL), Perú, email: aguayo@osiptel.gob.pe
- Ricardo Romero Magni, Agregado Económico, Embajada del Perú en el Uruguay, email: rromero@embaperu.org.uy
- Kevon Swift, Head of Public Safety Affairs, Registro de Direcciones de Internet para América Latina y Caribe (LACNIC), email: kevon@lacnic.net

### I. Panelistas/Panellists

- José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Secretario Ejecutivo de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), email: jose.salazarx@un.org
- Pablo Ruiz Hiebra, Coordinador Residente de las Naciones Unidas en el Uruguay, email: pablo.ruizhiebra@un.org
- Hebert Paguas, Director Ejecutivo de la Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC) del Uruguay, email: hebert.paguas@agesic.gub.uy
- Jorge Negrete, Presidente de Digital Policy & Law Group, email: jorgefernandonegrete@digitalpolicylaw.co
- Walter Verri, Ministro interino de Industria, Energía y Minería del Uruguay, email: subsecretario@miem.gub.uy
- Fernando Saguier, Ministro de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación del Paraguay, email: mmignaco@mitic.gov.py
- Maria Estella Dantas, Secretaria Ejecutiva del Ministerio de Comunicaciones del Brasil, email: estella.dantas@mcom.gov.br
- Orlando Vega, Viceministro de Telecomunicaciones del Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación, Tecnología y Telecomunicaciones de Costa Rica, email: orlando.vega@micitt.go.cr

- Félix Fernández-Shaw, Director para América Latina y el Caribe y Relaciones con los Territorios y Países de Ultramar de la Dirección General de Asociaciones Internacionales de la Comisión Europea, email: felix.fernandez-shaw@ec.europa.eu
- Anna Terrón, Directora de la Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP), email: javier.ramia@fiiapp.es
- Mario Castillo, Oficial a Cargo de la División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), email: mario.castillo@cepal.org
- Maryleana Méndez Jiménez, Secretaria General de la Asociación Interamericana de Empresas de Telecomunicaciones (ASIET), email: maryleana@tel.lat
- Nigel Cassimire, Secretario General Adjunto de la Unión de Telecomunicaciones del Caribe, email: nigel.cassimire@ctu.int
- Mercedes Aramendía, Presidenta de la Unidad Reguladora de Servicios de Comunicaciones (URSEC) del Uruguay, email: maramendia@ursec.gub.uy
- Rodrigo da Costa Serran, Jefe de Departamento de Integración Física y Digital de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI), email: rserran@aladi.org
- Diego Caicedo, Director General de la Secretaría General de la Comunidad Andina (CAN), email: dcaicedo@comunidadandina.org
- Guillermo Anlló, Especialista Regional del Programa Políticas de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO), email: g.anllo@unesco.org
- Raúl Katz, Director de Estudios de Estrategia Corporativa de la Universidad de Columbia y Presidente de Telecom Advisory Services (TAS), email: raul.katz@teleadvs.com
- Oscar Robles, Director Ejecutivo, Registro de Direcciones de Internet para América Latina y Caribe (LACNIC), email: oscar@lacnic.net
- Enrique Topolansky, Catedrático de Innovación y Negocios y Director del Centro de Innovación y Emprendimientos (CIE) de la Universidad ORT del Uruguay, email: topolansky@fi365.ort.edu.uy
- Amilcar Perea, Secretario General de la Cámara Uruguaya de Tecnologías de la Información (CUTI), email: amilcar.perea@inswitch.com
- Christian Castello, Gerente de Arquitectos de Soluciones para América del Sur de Amazon Web Services (AWS), email: cpcast@amazon.com.ar
- Lucía Scuro, Oficial Superior de Asuntos Económicos de la División de Asuntos de Género de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), email: lucia.scuro@cepal.org
- Hilda Patricia Polanco, Miembro del Consejo Directivo del Instituto Dominicano de las Telecomunicaciones (INDOTEL), email: hpolanco@indotel.gob.do
- Magdalena Furtado, Directora de Programas de la Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres (ONU-Mujeres), email: magdalena.furtado@unwomen.org
- Lucas Gallitto, Director para América Latina de GSMA, email: lgallitto@gsma.com
- Vagner Diniz, Gerente del Consorcio World Wide Web (W3C), email: vagner@nic.br
- Ximena Órdenes, Senadora de Chile, email: xordenes@senado.cl
- Sebastián Bellagamba, Vicepresidente de Relaciones Internacionales de Internet Society, email: bellagamba@isoc.org
- Álvaro Calderón, Jefe de la Unidad de Innovación y Nuevas Tecnologías de la División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), email: alvaro.calderon@cepal.org
- Fiorella Haim, Gerenta General del Plan Ceibal, Uruguay, email: fhaim@ceibal.edu.uy
- Luis Eliécer Cadenas, Director Ejecutivo de RedCLARA, email: luis.eliecer.cadenas@redclara.net

- Mario Coronado, Director de Asuntos Públicos de Telefónica Hispanoamérica, email: mario.coronado@telefonica.com
- Daniel Pérez, Director Nacional de Empleo del Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social del Uruguay, email: dperez@mtss.gub.uy
- Rodrigo Filgueira, Especialista en Digitalización y Formación Profesional del Centro Interamericano para el Desarrollo del Conocimiento en la Formación Profesional (CINTERFOR) de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT), email: filgueira@ilo.org
- Mauricio Papaleo, Director de Seguridad de la Información de la Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC) del Uruguay, email: mauricio.papaleo@agesic.gub.uy
- Jorge Mora, Experto del proyecto EU CyberNet de la Unión Europea, email: jorge@moraflores.com
- Rodrigo de la Parra, Vicepresidente para América Latina y el Caribe de la Corporación para la Asignación de Nombres y Números en Internet (ICANN), email: rodrigo.delaparra@icann.org
- Carolina A. Rossini, Directora de Asociaciones e Investigación de la Iniciativa Datasphere, email: rossini@thedatasphere.org
- Alfonso Jiménez, Director de Marketing y Estrategias de Huawei Cloud Latinoamérica, email: alfonso.jimenez.lara@huawei.com
- Carlos González, Coordinador del Grupo de Ciberseguridad de las Redes de Investigación y Educación de Latinoamérica y Gerente de Servicios de RedCLARA
- Andrés Piazza, Director del Instituto de Desarrollo Digital de América Latina y el Caribe (IDD LAC), email: apiazza@iddlac.org
- Alejandro Patiño, Oficial de Asuntos Económicos de la Unidad de Innovación y Nuevas Tecnologías de la División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), email: jorge.patino@cepal.org
- Alexandre Barbosa, Gerente del Centro Regional de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Sociedad de la Información (Cetic.br) del Brasil, email: alexandre@nic.br
- Diego Aboal, Director Técnico del Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) del Uruguay, email: aboal@cinve.org.uy
- Salma Jalife, Directora General del Centro México Digital, email: salma@centromexico.digital
- Nathalia Foditsch, Especialista en el área digital, email: nathalia@foditsch.com
- Claudio Araya San Martín, Subsecretario de Telecomunicaciones del Ministerio de Transportes y Telecomunicaciones de Chile, email: claudio.araya@subtel.gob.cl
- Nanno Mulder, Jefe de la Unidad de Comercio Sostenible de la División de Comercio Internacional e Integración de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), email: nanno.mulder@cepal.org
- Sibelle de Andrade Silva, Directora del Departamento de Apoyo a la Innovación Agropecuaria del Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Abastecimiento del Brasil, email: sibelle.silva@agro.gov.br
- Francine Brossard, Directora Ejecutiva de la Fundación para la Innovación Agraria (FIA) de Chile, email: fbrossard@fia.cl
- Jaime Cortés, Profesor de Comunicación Social de la Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios de Colombia, email: jcortes@uniminuto.edu
- Vanessa Rojas, Gestora de Proyectos del Instituto del Café (ICAFFE) de Costa Rica, email: vrojas@icaffe.cr
- Miguel Sierra, Gerente de Innovación y Comunicación del Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria (INIA) del Uruguay, email: msierra@inia.org.uy
- Raúl Echeberría, Director Ejecutivo de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Internet (ALAI), email: raul@alai.lat

- Guillermo Varela, Presidente de la Cámara de la Economía Digital del Uruguay (CEDU), email: presidente@cedu.org.uy
- Susana Pecoy, Directora Nacional de Industrias del Ministerio de Industria, Energía y Minería del Uruguay, email: susana.pecoy@miem.gub.uy
- Salvador Bonilla Ibáñez, Asesor de la División de Inversiones, Servicios y Economía Digital de la Subsecretaría de Relaciones Económicas Internacionales del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, email: jbonilla@subrei.gob.cl
- Daniel Cavalcanti, Coordinador General de Políticas Públicas para Servicios de Telecomunicaciones del Ministerio de Comunicaciones del Brasil, email: daniel.cavalcanti@mcom.gov.br
- Eleonora Rabinovich, Gerente Senior de Políticas Públicas y Asuntos Gubernamentales de Google (virtual), email: erabinovich@google.com
- Matías Fernández, Gerente Senior de Asuntos Públicos de Mercado Libre, email: matias.fernandez@mercadolibre.com
- Laura Lacuague, Coordinadora de la Unidad Ambiental del Ministerio de Industria, Energía y Minería del Uruguay, email: laura.lacuague@miem.gub.uy
- Sebastián Nieto Parra, Jefe de la Unidad de América Latina y el Caribe del Centro de Desarrollo de la Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económicos (OCDE), email: sebastian.nietoparra@oecd.org
- Mauricio Agudelo, Especialista Senior del Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF), email: eagudelo@caf.com
- Claudio Maggi, Gerente de Asuntos Estratégicos de la Corporación de Fomento de la Producción (CORFO) de Chile, email: claudio.maggi@corfo.cl
- Mariana Rodríguez Zani, Directora General de Convergencia Research y de Convergencialatina, email: rodriguezani@convergencia.com
- Sebastián Cabello, Director de SmC+, email: sebastian@smcplusconsulting.com
- Javier Altszyler, Director General de Canales Digitales de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina, email: jaltszyler@buenosaires.gob.ar
- Jorge Pérez, Director General de Operación Tecnológica de la Agencia Digital de Innovación Pública del Gobierno de la Ciudad de México, México, email: jlperez@cdmx.gob.mx
- Alfie Ulloa, Presidente Ejecutivo de la Asociación Chilena de Telecomunicaciones (Chile Telcos), email: alfie.ulloa@gmail.com
- Luukas Ilves, Subsecretario de Transformación Digital, Ministerio de Economía y Comunicaciones de Estonia (virtual), email: luukas.ilves@mkm.ee
- Marushka Chocobar, Secretaria de Gobierno y Transformación Digital de la Presidencia del Consejo de Ministros del Perú, email: mchocobar@pcm.gob.pe
- Pedro Quezada, Director de la Oficina Gubernamental de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación (OGTIC) de la República Dominicana, email: pedro.quezada@ogtic.gob.do
- Virginia Pardo, Directora de Sociedad de la Información de la Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información y del Conocimiento (AGESIC) del Uruguay, email: virginia.pardo@agesic.gub.uy
- Ana Carina Rodríguez, Subsecretaria de Servicios y País Digital de la Secretaría de Innovación Pública de la Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministros de la Argentina, email: wahlbergv@jefatura.gob.ar russoma@jefatura.gob.ar
- Luis Yáñez, Secretario de la Comisión, CEPAL, email: luis.yanez@cepal.org
- Jorge Srur, Gerente Regional Sur del Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF), email: jsrur@caf.com
- Sergio Abreu, Secretario General de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI)
- Federico Bonaglia, Director Adjunto del Centro de Desarrollo de la Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económicos (OCDE), email: federico.bonaglia@oecd.org

## J. Secretaría/Secretariat

### **Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

- José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Secretario Ejecutivo/Executive Secretary, email: jose.salazarx@un.org
- Luis Yáñez, Secretario de la Comisión/Secretary of the Commission, email: luis.yanez@cepal.org
- Mario Castillo, Oficial a Cargo, División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial/Officer in Charge, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, email: mario.castillo@cepal.org
- Gerardo Mendoza, Jefe, Unidad de Gerencia de Proyectos, División de Planificación de Programas y Operaciones/Chief, Project Management Unit, Programme Planning and Operations Division, email: gerardo.mendoza@cepal.org
- Silvia Hernández, Jefa, Oficina de la Secretaría Ejecutiva/Chief, Office of the Executive Secretary, email: silvia.hernandez@cepal.org
- Romain Zivy, Coordinador, Oficina de la Secretaría Ejecutiva/Coordinator, Office of the Executive Secretary, email: romain.zivy@cepal.org
- Lucía Scuro, Oficial Superior de Asuntos Económicos, División de Asuntos de Género/Senior Social Affairs Officer, Division for Gender Affairs, email: lucia.scuro@cepal.org
- Álvaro Calderón, Jefe, Unidad de Innovación y Nuevas Tecnologías, División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial/Chief, Innovation and New Technologies Unit, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, email: alvaro.calderon@cepal.org
- Alejandro Patiño, Oficial de Asuntos Económicos, Unidad de Innovación y Nuevas Tecnologías, División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial/Economic Affairs Officer, Innovation and New Technologies Unit, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, email: jorge.patino@cepal.org
- Nanno Mulder, Jefe, Unidad de Comercio Sostenible, División de Comercio Internacional e Integración/Chief, Sustainable Trade Unit, International Trade and Integration Division, email: nanno.mulder@cepal.org
- Sebastián Rovira, Oficial de Asuntos Económicos, División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial/Economic Affairs Officer, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, email: sebastian.rovira@cepal.org
- Valeria Torres, Oficial a Cargo, Área de Gestión Pública y Gobierno Abierto, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Officer in Charge, Public Management and Open Government Area, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: valeria.torres@cepal.org
- Alejandra Naser, Asistente de Asuntos Económicos, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Economic Affairs Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: alejandra.naser@un.org
- Octavio Sotomayor, Oficial de Asuntos Económicos, Unidad de Desarrollo Agrícola y Biodiversidad, División de Recursos Naturales/Economic Affairs Officer, Agriculture and Biodiversity Unit, Natural Resources Division, email: octavio.sotomayor@cepal.org
- Luis Flores, Asistente de Investigación, Oficina de la Secretaría de la Comisión/Research Assistant, Office of the Secretary of the Commission, email: luis.flores@cepal.org
- Guido Camú, Jefe, Unidad de Información Pública/Chief, Public Information Unit, email: guido.camu@cepal.org

- Francisca Lira, Asistente, División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial/Assistant, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, email: [francisca.lira@cepal.org](mailto:francisca.lira@cepal.org)
- Gordana Stojkovic, Asistente, División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial/Assistant, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, email: [gordana.stojkovic@cepal.org](mailto:gordana.stojkovic@cepal.org)
- María José Hernández, Asistente, División de Desarrollo Productivo y Empresarial/Assistant,