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**DIGITAL AGENDA FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN (eLAC2026)**

A. BACKGROUND

The accelerated pace of the digital transformation is reshaping economies and societies worldwide. Recognizing the growing importance of digital cooperation, the Member States of the United Nations adopted the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations,¹ which contains the commitment "We will improve digital cooperation". On that basis, the Summit of the Future adopted the Global Digital Compact on 22 September 2024, as part of The Pact for the Future.² The Compact reinforces the global commitment to an open, free and secure digital future and addresses the technological changes that are profoundly influencing all aspects of society. These efforts are aligned with the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society reflected in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of technological advances for addressing economic, social and environmental challenges, with targets including increasing access to information and communications technology (ICT) and providing universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries.

In line with these global initiatives, it is important to recognize the essential role of digital technologies in addressing economic, social and institutional challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) recognizes that Latin America and the Caribbean is facing three development traps: low capacity for growth; high inequality and low social mobility; and weak institutional capacities and ineffective governance. As reflected in the aforementioned initiatives, digital technologies have a key role to play in addressing these traps.

From an economic perspective, digitalization has the potential to boost productivity and competitiveness by facilitating access to international markets and fostering innovation and efficiency in key sectors, especially if digital transformation efforts are combined with productive development policies. From a social perspective, digital technologies must promote inclusion by expanding access to social services, in addition to improving education and health. From an institutional and governance perspective, digitalization can also make public administrations more transparent and efficient by strengthening governance, citizen participation and social dialogue. Taken together, these technologies, when actually and effectively used, can act as catalysts for more productive, inclusive and sustainable development.

In the 19 years since the 2005 adoption of the first Plan of Action for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the region has strengthened cooperation and coordination on digital issues among countries. However, there are major challenges that will have to be addressed to navigate technological change and the digital revolution. The ninth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean is a fundamental forum for renewing policy priorities, facilitating the exchange of experiences among all stakeholders in the digital ecosystem and, more importantly, redoubling efforts to enable the region to deepen the real and effective use of digital technologies to address its development challenges, through concrete projects and actions.

In that connection, the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2026), consisting of three axes, three thematic pillars and a set of strategic objectives, is presented below. This comprehensive agenda seeks to promote more productive, inclusive and sustainable development in the region through digital transformation. The first axis focuses on strengthening and supporting meaningful connectivity and digital infrastructure; the second relates to governance and digital security; and the third focuses on

¹ General Assembly resolution 75/1 of 21 September 2020.

² General Assembly resolution 79/1 of 22 September 2024.

fostering innovation, emerging technologies and artificial intelligence for sustainable development. With regard to the thematic pillars, the first relates to digital transformation for productive development; the second relates to digital transformation for well-being; and the third relates to the digital transformation of the State.

B. PROPOSED DIGITAL AGENDA FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (eLAC2026)

Axis 1: Meaningful connectivity and digital infrastructure

Strategic objectives

1. *Support universal access*: Deploy telecommunications infrastructure in rural and underserved areas, including the expansion of broadband networks, by leveraging universal access funds, strategies and regulatory frameworks that foster competition and investment and that facilitate the construction, operation and sharing of passive and active infrastructure.
2. *Foster meaningful connectivity*: Ensure universal and affordable access to high-quality digital infrastructure, facilitating the use of appropriate devices and the development of digital skills for the entire population and the business sector, to increase social inclusion and competitiveness.
3. *Expand and improve digital infrastructure*: Invest in, finance and deploy resilient digital infrastructure, including high-speed fixed broadband networks, mobile networks, satellites, data centres, Internet exchange points and increased processing power for artificial intelligence, in addition to the adoption of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6), efficient use of radio spectrum and orbital resources.

Axis 2: Governance and digital security

Strategic objectives

4. *Strengthen digital security*: Implement digital security measures by advocating for policies, standards and strategies that protect and improve the resilience of systems, equipment and critical infrastructure against digital threats, in addition to ensuring the integrity of information and increasing the digital security literacy of citizens and governments.
5. *Support child safety online*: Prioritize the development and implementation of policies and standards for the safety of children online in accordance with international law, human rights and the rights of children.
6. *Strengthen the protection of personal data*: Develop solid frameworks and governance mechanisms for data protection to safeguard privacy, transparency and the security of personal information, and clearly delineate steps for compliance, in the framework of international cooperation.
7. *Strengthen governance for the digital transformation*: Strengthen institutions and inter-institutional mechanisms for coordination with the private sector, academia, the technical community and civil society to design, implement and monitor digital policies, securing commensurate resources and ensuring constant dialogue and continuous improvement.

8. *Improve and encourage the measurement of digital transformation:* Develop processes for measurement, data collection and the harmonization of indicators, and the sharing of experiences to track and measure progress in the digital transformation, in addition to assessing the impact of policies, programmes and projects.
9. *Create an enabling regulatory framework that fosters competition, investment and innovation:* Cultivate a legal and regulatory environment for digital matters, based on internationally agreed principles, international law and human rights, that strengthens innovation and competition in the digital ecosystem, ensuring the participation of all stakeholders in accordance with their roles and responsibilities.

Axis 3: Innovation, emerging technologies and artificial intelligence for sustainable development

Strategic objectives

10. *Develop ethical and responsible frameworks for artificial intelligence:* Establish guidelines and regulations for the development and use of artificial intelligence that prioritize development and well-being, democracy, human rights, equity, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, privacy and transparency, ensuring model security, mitigating bias and avoiding the reproduction of inequalities in the digital environment while encouraging innovation and ensuring regulatory flexibility to adapt to rapid technological progress.
11. *Leverage artificial intelligence for social well-being and productive development:* Explore and implement applications of artificial intelligence in areas such as health, education, environmental protection and climate change, and support its adoption in key productive areas and sectors to address productivity and growth challenges, with an emphasis on local solutions and entrepreneurship.
12. *Build artificial intelligence skills and knowledge:* Invest in artificial intelligence research, education and training programmes to cultivate a skilled workforce, encourage innovation and tailor solutions to specific needs and local contexts.
13. *Foster international collaboration on artificial intelligence:* Participate in global, regional and national initiatives to shape the development and use of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity, in particular the development of talent, data and infrastructure, and national strategies and plans on artificial intelligence.
14. *Support the adoption of emerging technologies:* Encourage the real and effective use of emerging technologies, such as Internet of things, artificial intelligence and quantum computing to improve productivity, social inclusion and well-being, and institutional and governance capacities.
15. *Support digital public goods and open innovation:* Share software, artificial intelligence models and data based on open standards, recognizing the ability of open innovation to drive the digital transformation and innovation.

Thematic pillar 1: Digital transformation for productive development

Strategic objectives

16. *Encourage linkages and coordination between digital transformation policies and productive development policies:* Foster the real and effective use of digital technologies, in particular in strategic economic sectors that countries and their territories have prioritized in their productive development policies, and ensure their alignment with broader sustainable development objectives.
17. *Foster a prosperous digital economy:* Support e-commerce, digital financial services and the real and effective adoption of digital technologies by companies, in particular micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, in addition to the digitization of strategic economic sectors to maximize the benefits of the digital transformation, in an environment that favours competition and ensures adequate protections for consumers' and workers' rights.
18. *Strengthen innovation, entrepreneurship and the regional ICT sector:* Support the development and creation of digital, technology-based and ICT companies, through financing access mechanisms, incentives, specialized training programmes, technical assistance, strategic investment attraction and productive development agendas for the ICT sector.
19. *Encourage the formation and consolidation of digital ecosystems:* Create and consolidate networks that bring together companies, technology parks, academic institutions, research centres and other stakeholders to encourage collaborative innovation and the development of digital solutions, and develop countries' computing capacity with a view to strengthening digital sovereignty.
20. *Build digital skills in the workforce:* Develop and implement digital skills-building, education and training programmes to equip the workforce with the skills they need to participate in the digital economy.
21. *Support digital and data markets at the regional level:* Reduce administrative barriers and improve regulatory convergence and the regional integration of digital trade by fostering coordination and cooperation among organizations, institutions and regional integration mechanisms.
22. *Foster a just and competitive digital ecosystem:* Design regulations that prevent monopolistic practices, thereby protecting the rights of consumers and improving the equity of digital and data markets.

Thematic pillar 2: Digital transformation for well-being

Strategic objectives

23. *Transform health by means of digital tools:* Use telemedicine, electronic health records and other digital solutions to improve access to and quality of health care and health.
24. *Leverage digital technologies for the development of education:* Promote the people-centred integration of education systems with digital technologies, through teacher training in digital skills, the development of inclusive platforms and equal access to digital educational resources.
25. *Establish and support national strategies on digital skills and competencies:* Adapt school and training curricula aimed at children, adolescents and young people, and establish teacher training programmes for the digital era, complementing them with training programmes for the general public that promote the protection of rights and the fulfilment of responsibilities in the digital environment.

26. *Support programmes to strengthen workforce capacities and skills*: Encourage the development of capacities and skills to cope with rapid technological changes and challenges and to mitigate the possible negative consequences of technological change.
27. *Incorporate a gender perspective in digital transformation strategies*: Address structural, systemic and social barriers to the digital empowerment of women and girls and boys and their participation in the digital economy, taking into account local realities.
28. *Take measures to mitigate and prevent the harmful effects of digital technologies on individuals, with a special focus on children, adolescents, young people and older persons*: Adopt multidisciplinary measures that include regulation, education, research and cooperation to create a safer and healthier online environment for individuals, especially children, adolescents, young people and older persons.
29. *Combat disinformation, radicalization and violent extremism*: Promote policies and strategies that strengthen resilience to disinformation, promoting education, including on the media and human rights, and establishing mechanisms to prevent the dissemination of false, harmful and illegal content.
30. *Ensure digital inclusion and accessibility*: Adopt international policies and standards so that persons with disabilities and vulnerable population groups have full access to and benefit from digital technologies, enhancing equal access to technology.

Thematic pillar 3: Digital transformation of the State

Strategic objectives

31. *Modernize government processes and services*: Streamline and digitalize government processes and services to improve efficiency, transparency, citizen participation, feedback, accountability and social dialogue, with a proactive and omnichannel service model.
32. *Improve digital identity and signature systems*: Implement secure and reliable digital identity and signature solutions to facilitate access to public services and promote cross-border digital services in a framework of regional integration.
33. *Adopt digital systems to modernize the public procurement of goods, services and public works*: Encourage government e-procurement to ensure transparency, monitoring, citizen oversight and effective accountability.
34. *Promote digital agendas and strategies in cities and local governments*: Advance in digital transformation to address challenges in public services, transport, mobility, resource management, security and productive development at local level.
35. *Promote open government and open data*: Promote the publication and use of open data to improve accountability and transparency and drive innovation, collaboration, decision-making and the empowerment of individuals.
36. *Promote innovation applied to government solutions*: Promote the development of innovative solutions for addressing government challenges, including open innovation models, supported by local digital ecosystems.
37. *Establish robust digital and data governance frameworks*: Develop and implement comprehensive policies that foster information-sharing and innovation, ensuring privacy, security and interoperability in government digital systems, and that aim to use and harness data for decision-making, policy design and governance.

38. *Harness digital technologies to strengthen institutional capacities and address governance challenges*: Promote the use of digital technologies to strengthen institutional capacities, improving the efficiency and transparency of institutions and their adaptability to governance challenges.

C. FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM AND GOVERNANCE OF THE DIGITAL AGENDA FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The follow-up mechanism of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean has its origins in the agreements adopted by the countries of the region at the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It comprises four levels of coordination and cooperation: the Ministerial Conference, the Presiding Officers, focal points and working groups. ECLAC serves as the technical secretariat for the mechanism and the Digital Agenda, providing support through the Digital Development Observatory and the Policy Lab for the Digital Transformation, with key tools for the design and monitoring of digital transformation policies.

Ministerial Conference: This is the highest governing and decision-making body of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean, responsible for evaluating the achievement of agreed objectives and making the necessary adjustments and changes to the follow-up mechanism.

Presiding Officers: This is the executive body of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean and is composed of two representatives from each of the following subregions: Andean countries; Central America and Mexico; the Southern Cone; and the Caribbean. They serve until the following meeting of the Ministerial Conference. Their main functions are: (i) to supervise the activities undertaken in the framework of the Agenda; (ii) to represent the Agenda in other forums or international organizations or designate representatives, following consultation of all members; (iii) to approve and review the formation of working groups; (iv) to prepare a programme of work in accordance with the plans of the working groups; (v) to propose the establishment of committees and subsidiary bodies to assist in the performance of their duties; and (vi) to convene and hold regular coordination meetings.

The Presiding Officers may allow organizations and institutions from the private sector, the technical community, international organizations and civil society to participate as observers.

Focal points: These are the national points of contact for the follow-up mechanism of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean. Each country must appoint or endorse the institution or individual that will serve as focal point. If there is a change in national representatives, it is the responsibility of the member countries of the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean to inform the technical secretariat. Their main functions are: (i) to organize, coordinate and promote the participation of the country in the process; (ii) to provide the means to ensure the country's representation at preparatory meetings and the Ministerial Conference; and (iii) to identify the institutions and individuals to serve as coordinators of the working groups.

Working groups: Working groups are forums for cooperation in the framework of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean, established perform a specific task under the direction of a coordinator. Their work is geared towards achieving the objectives of the Agenda, through collaborative projects and activities. The participants in the working groups will be designated by the countries. Their main functions are: (i) to promote the formation of networks and cooperation mechanisms; (ii) to encourage dialogue and the sharing of experiences and good practices; (iii) to stimulate the building and

strengthening of capacities; (iv) to promote knowledge generation and substantive analysis, (v) to help build institutional links with other forums and organizations; and (vi) to foster the development of regional projects and actions.

Technical secretariat: ECLAC, in its capacity as technical secretariat of the follow-up mechanism of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean, will perform the following functions: (i) provide technical support, specifically to the Presiding Officers and its Chair, and facilitate the organization and coordination of the working groups; (ii) produce studies and substantive information, develop indicators and metrics, prepare newsletters and maintain the online collaborative platform; and (iii) provide support for the organization of the preparatory meeting and the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean. The technical secretariat will also ensure that the Digital Development Observatory and the Digital Transformation Policy Lab are made available to the Digital Agenda.

Digital Development Observatory: This is a platform for monitoring and evaluating progress in digital transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its main function is to collect, analyse and disseminate relevant data and information on the status of digitalization in the region and digital markets. This includes producing key indicators, standardizing statistics to facilitate cross-country comparisons and conducting in-depth studies on specific issues related to the digital economy, digital inclusion and the impact of technologies on various sectors. Through the Observatory the necessary efforts will be made to measure progress towards the objectives of the Digital Agenda.

Policy Lab for the Digital Transformation: This is an innovative space that aims to advance the definition of new digital transformation policies and instruments in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its main objective is to develop robust methodological frameworks for the design of digital transformation policies and to facilitate access to and use of data science and technology tools and instruments. The Lab also seeks to foster regional collaborative projects, creating an enabling environment for sharing knowledge and experience between public agencies, the private sector, academia and the technical community.

D. TARGETS

Below is a list of targets to be achieved within the framework of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2026).

| Regional targets for 2026 ^a | Baseline | Indicator |
|--|----------------|---|
| Double the population covered by 5G networks ^b | 36% (2023) | Percentage of the total population covered by 5G networks |
| 70% fixed broadband penetration in households | 66% (2023) | Percentage of fixed broadband penetration in households |
| 100 Mbps as average fixed broadband connection speed (downstream) for the region | 85 Mbps (2024) | Fixed broadband connection speed (downstream) |
| 33 Mbps as average mobile broadband connection speed (downstream) for the region | 28 Mbps (2024) | Mobile broadband connection speed (downstream) |

| Regional targets for 2026^a | Baseline | Indicator |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| 20 countries improve their ranking in the e-Government Development Index (EGDI) of the United Nations | 13 countries (2022–2024) | Number of countries improving their ranking in the e-Government Development Index (EGDI) of the United Nations |
| 52% of companies with e-commerce operations | 50% (2023) | Percentage of companies that receive orders online |
| 50% of the population has basic digital skills | 45% (2022) | Percentage of the population with basic digital skills |
| 20% of the population has advanced digital skills ^c | 14% (2022) | Percentage of the population with advanced digital skills |
| 30 countries of the region have a national cybersecurity strategy | 17 of 33 countries (2023) | Number of countries in the region with a national cybersecurity strategy |
| 6 countries ranked as pioneers in the Latin American artificial intelligence index (ILIA) | 3 countries listed as pioneers (2023) | Number of countries ranked as pioneers in the Latin American artificial intelligence index (ILIA) |

^a Targets are based on regional averages and available information. The benchmarks for targets are regional rather than national, taking into account the baseline scenario.

^b Baseline average for 8 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

^c Average for 9 countries: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.