

First ESCWA-LAS Joint Workshop on Developing the Arab Digital Agenda / ICT Strategy

Online Meeting, 23-24 March 2021



Only 67% of the individuals and 60% of the households in the region use the internet



Mobile broadband penetration, 70%, fixed broadband 14%



1/3 of the population has limited or no access due to their economic condition



33% of urban households are not connected



77% of rural households are not connected



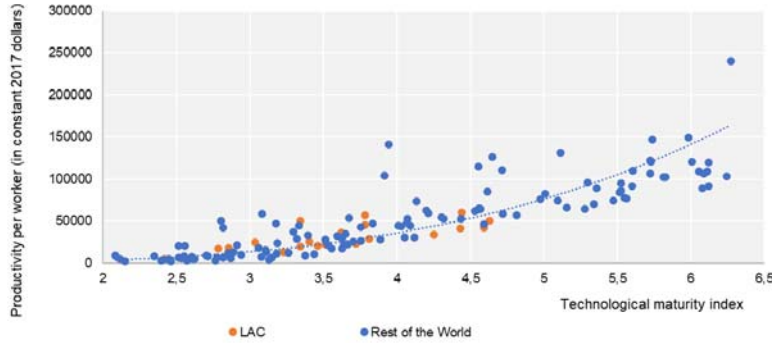
42% of those under 25 and 54% of those over 66 have no connection

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)



Technical progress is the basis for productivity growth

Latin America and the Caribbean: productivity per worker and technological maturity, 2010-2018
(In thousands of constant 2017 dollars and in technological maturity index)



From a longer-term perspective, the past 60 years have witnessed a growing divergence between the region's productivity and that of the most developed and emerging economies, which has been particularly pronounced since the 1980s

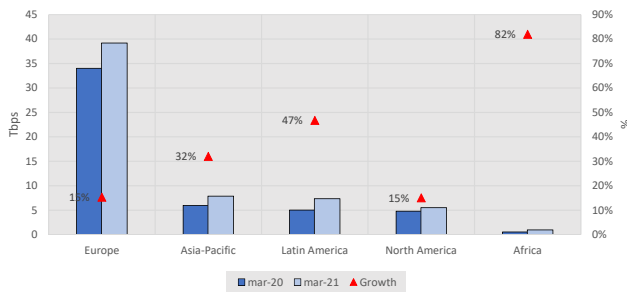
In contrast to the developed countries and the emerging economies of Asia, the countries of the region have not reaped the benefits of successive great waves of technological transformation, particularly the digital revolution that began in the 1990s and the more recent and still nascent 4.0 era

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Bank

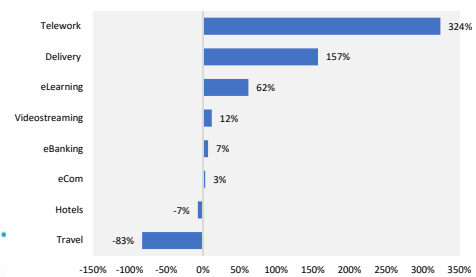


Digital technologies: a key role in the pandemic

Domestic bandwidth production, by region (Mar 2020-Mar 2021)



Latin America Online Activity (between the first and second quarters of 2020 based on Website Traffic)



Adoption of digital solutions accelerates due COVID-19 but conditioned by structural factors

Digitization of production

- Technological adoption conditioned by the business heterogeneity.
- Lack of digital skills.
- Dominant position of large digital companies in the platform economy could translate into abuse of market power in several sectors.
- Greater markets need to promote economies of scale.

Telework

- Limited by the productive structure and informality.
- **Less than 22% of formal employees can work from home.**
- Greater impact on women: unfair gender divide of labor and excessive unpaid care and domestic workload.
- A third of the countries have sanctioned regulatory frameworks.

eLearning

- Difficult due to lack of access to equipment and connection.
- **Fewer than 40% of children live in a connected home.**
- Overcrowding impairs the quality of distance education.
- 43% of public primary schools use the Internet for pedagogical purposes
- Digital solutions are concentrated at the university level.

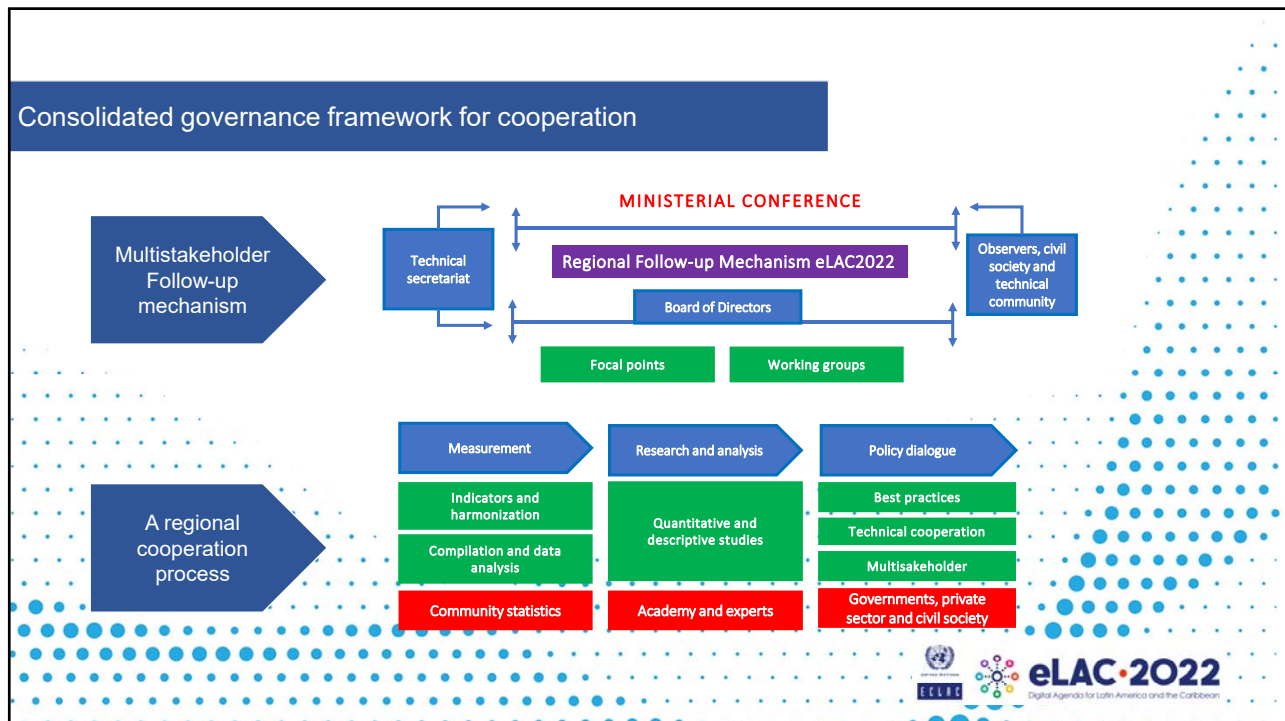
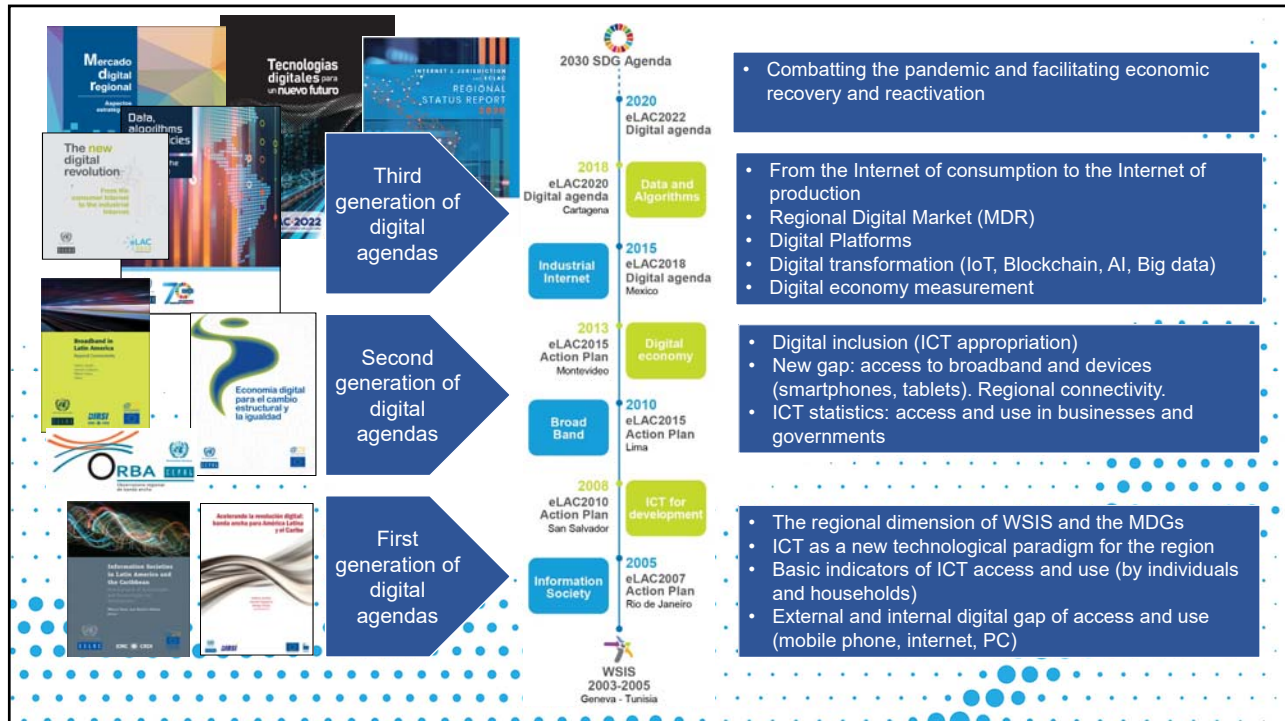
eHealth

- Difficulty of cost, reimbursement process, legal liability and privacy
- Health systems fragmented by income levels.
- Less than half of the population affiliated to social protection.
- Delay in regulatory frameworks

Seventh Ministerial Conference on the Information Society

- The seventh Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean was held online, from 23 to 26 of November 2020 and was convened by ECLAC and the Government of Ecuador.
- 21 member States from LAC attended the conference.
- Countries agreed on a new digital agenda towards 2022 with 39 goals and 8 areas of action
 - Digital infrastructure
 - Digital transformation and digital economy
 - Digital government
 - Inclusion, digital skills and competences
 - Emerging technologies
 - Trust and digital security
 - Regional digital market
 - Digital cooperation
 - COVID-19 recovery





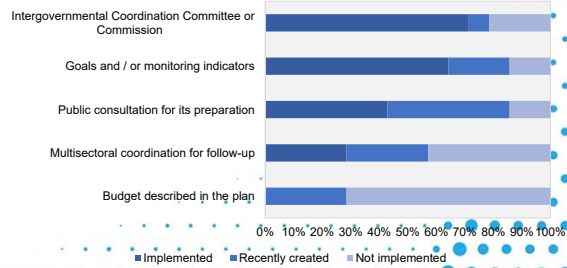
Institutional and design challenges in digital agendas in LAC

Latin America and the Caribbean (27 countries): state of national digital agendas, 2020

Country	Digital agenda
Argentina	
Barbados	N
Bolivia (Plur. State of)	
Brazil	
Chile	
Colombia	
Costa Rica	
Cuba	
Ecuador	N
El Salvador	N
Guatemala	
Granada	N
Haiti	N
Honduras	N
Jamaica	
Mexico	N
Nicaragua	N
Paraguay	
Peru	
Venezuela (Bol. State of)	N
Dominican Republic	
Trinidad y Tobago	
Uruguay	
	Ongoing
N	Need for creation or update

Out of 27 countries, 16 have current digital agendas that are being implemented, while 11 require a plan or reform. Most of English-speaking Caribbean countries need to update or review their strategies

Latin America and the Caribbean (14 countries): institutional characteristics of national digital agendas, 2020



Public consultations on strategy design, the creation of multisectoral coordination mechanisms and explicit budgeting in agendas are fewer common features in LAC

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2021



Still several challenges in terms of institutions linked to connectivity

Latin America (9 countries): national connectivity policies

National connectivity policy	ARG	BRA	CHI	COL	ECU	GTM	MEX	PER	URY
Telecom / ICT Ministry									
Independent regulator									
Centralized national broadband plan									
Programs on demand									
Coverage objectives									
Universal access service funds									
State telecom operator									
Public investment in national fiber network									

National broadband plans tend to be general. Although most of the countries have universal access and service funds financed by private contributions, not all use them for connectivity. There is an underutilization of available funds (56% in Argentina and 75% in Colombia and Peru, for example). In Brazil and Ecuador, these funds tend to be captured by the treasury to reduce the fiscal deficit.

Latin America (9 countries): sectoral characteristics of digital policy

Sectoral agendas	ARG	BRA	CHI	COL	ECU	MEX	PER	URY
Specific agenda in agriculture								
In line with the national plan								
Specific agenda in industry								
In line with the national plan								
Specific agenda in education								
In line with the national plan								
Specific health agenda								
In line with the national plan								

Similarly, sectoral bodies play a central role in the development of digital policies in areas such as education, health care and security. The design and coordination of these sectoral agendas and programmes varies between sectors and countries.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2021

In the post-COVID world, **social welfare** will not be possible without **digital transformation**

- **Promote equality**
 - Universal Internet access.
 - Non-exclusive digital transformation processes.
 - Multichannel interaction with the State guaranteeing adequate access to digital technologies and skills.
- **Protect economic, labor and social rights**
 - Efficient social protection systems that are easy to access and use through digital technologies.
 - Eligibility processes determined by transparent electronic means.
- **Reject unauthorized collection or improper or unauthorized use of personal data**
 - High standards of information security and privacy.
 - Access to public information and fight against corruption.
- **Promote a digital governance model with a strategic productive vision**
 - Structural change through innovation and technological diffusion in the productive apparatus
 - New business models, generation of digital capacities and skills, and financing to boost the economy digital.



Recent publications



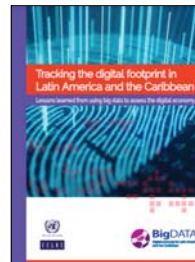
Universalizing access to digital technologies to address the consequences of COVID-19

<https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/45939-universalizing-access-digital-technologies-address-consequences-covid-19>



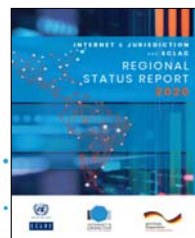
Latin American Economic Outlook 2020: Digital transformation for building back better

<https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/46030-latin-american-economic-outlook-2020-digital-transformation-building-back-better>



Tracking the digital footprint in Latin America and the Caribbean: Lessons learned from using big data to assess the digital economy

<https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/45484-tracking-digital-footprint-latin-america-and-caribbean-lessons-learned-using-big>



Internet & Jurisdiction and ECLAC Regional Status Report 2020

<https://www.cepal.org/tr/node/52747>



Thanks!
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