



SUMMIT FINAL REPORT

Introduction

The Connect Americas Summit was held in Panama City, Panama from 17 to 19 July 2012, under the patronage of the President of Panama, His Excellency Ricardo Alberto Martinelli Berrocal. It was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in partnership with CITEL, COMTELCA and CTU.

The Summit included some 654 participants from 36 countries, including 7 Heads of State or Government, 12 Ministers, 48 international and regional organizations and 158 private sector companies and other stakeholders.

The Connect Americas Summit was the fourth in a series of ITU-led *Connect the World*¹ aimed at mobilizing the human, financial and technical resources required to close Information and Communication Technology gaps in the region. The Summit offered a venue for leaders from the public and private sectors as well as international and regional financing and development agencies to network face-to-face and forge new partnerships.

The Summit was preceded by a preparatory process (including consultation meetings in Mexico City, Mexico, and Port of Spain, Trinidad) during which ICT development projects and project holders were identified, as well as partners and donors willing to contribute to the implementation of the selected projects, with a view to enhance the deployment of ICT networks, applications and services within the region.

The Summit featured high-level interactive panels focused on the challenges posed for developing economies in harnessing the full potential of ICTs. A number of significant multi-stakeholder partnerships to meet these challenges were announced. In addition, a Summit Communiqué issued by leaders from the Americas demonstrated a high-level political commitment to the outcomes of the Summit.²

Summit Format

On the first day of the Summit three meetings were held, which primarily focused on producing the main outputs of the Summit.

1. Multi-stakeholder Meeting

The purpose of this meeting was to bring together stakeholders to discuss the 82 projects valued at more than \$54 billion, which had been submitted for consideration by the Summit, representing market opportunities in the region. The meeting brought together governments, regional organizations, private sector, development banks, academia, and non-governmental

¹ For more information about the Connect the World initiative, visit: www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/index.html.

² The Summit Communiqué can be found at: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/americas/communique.asp>.

organizations. Discussions were based on projects contained in a publication entitled 'Projects and Initiatives: Making a Difference in the Americas Region Through ICTs,³ which was prepared for the Summit. The Secretariat informed participants that additional projects that missed the deadline for inclusion in the book were available on the Summit website. A number of statements were made by partners who were interested in forging partnerships on projects that were presented. All of the expressions of interest were followed up and were processed for formal announcements on the last day of the Summit.

2. Drafting Group Meeting

This meeting gave delegations and representatives of the Americas the opportunity to reach agreement on the content of the Summit Communique to be endorsed at Ministerial level.

3. Ministerial Meeting

This meeting debated and endorsed the Summit Communique, which laid out a vision and number of priorities. It also referred to projects presented along with a follow-up mechanism that would be implemented after the Summit by the ITU, regional and sub-regional organizations and other stakeholders.

The Summit Opening Press Conference also took place on the first day of the Summit.

During the Opening Ceremony, speeches were delivered by H.E. Ricardo Alberto Martinelli Berrocal, President of Panama, H.E. Dr. Hamadoun Toure, ITU Secretary General, Ms. Zelmar Rodríguez Crespo, General Administrator, Autoridad Nacional de los Servicios Públicos (ASEP) and H. E. Mrs Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica and Patron of the ITU Child Online Protection initiative.

Following the Opening Ceremony, policy statements were made by Heads of State and Government and their designates.⁴ Speakers included: H. E. Mr. Víctor Nazim Gordon Burke, Representante del Excelentísimo Señor Tillman Thomas, Prime Ministro, Granada; H.E. Mrs Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan, Minister of Public Administration; H. E. Mr. Samuel Armando Reyes Rendón, Designado Presidencial, Honduras, and; Honorable Señora Margarita Cedeño de Fernández Primera Dama y Vicepresidenta electa, República Dominicana. This session was followed by an opening debate and then 'setting the stage' remarks by Mr. Brahim Sanou, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau.

Over the rest of the programme, delegates participated in a series of interactive sessions debating issues related to the themes of Broadband Roll-out, Digital Inclusion, and ICTs for Public Safety, Emergency Communications and Climate Change.⁵ The Summit wrapped up with a special session on partnership announcements (see the section below "announcements" for details).

³ This publication can be found at: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/americas/projects.asp>.

⁴ The full speeches and policy statements of the Opening Ceremony are available through the following link: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/americas/programme.asp?Language=en>.

⁵ The outcome notes for each session are available in the programme at: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/americas/programme.asp?Language=en>. The archived webcast of all sessions can be accessed at: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/americas/display.asp?QID=10655&Language=en>.

Commitments

During the Summit, participants commended the progress achieved as a result of efforts deployed in recent years to harness ICTs, increase rates of growth, reduce poverty and promote sustainable development in the region. They re-affirmed their commitment to realizing the vision of an inclusive Information Society for all as outlined in the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and leveraging the potential of ICTs to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Government leaders also agreed to intensify efforts in the coming years in order to make progress on a number of priority areas, as outlined in the Summit Communiqué.

Partnership Announcements

All stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society and regional and international organizations agreed to work together on the Summit priorities, keeping in mind the diverse needs of the countries in the region, including varying levels of telecommunication development and market conditions. A number of stakeholders made announcements during the Summit.⁶

Follow-up mechanism

As requested by the leaders present in Panama, a follow-up mechanism will be implemented by ITU in collaboration with CITEL, COMTELCA and CTU and other regional/sub-regional organizations, with the aim of identifying gaps and avoiding overlap as well as tracking progress on the implementation of the Summit outcomes.

⁶ Announcements can be found at: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/americas/announcements.asp>.