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Note by the WSIS Executive Secretariat

**REPORT OF THE LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR WSIS (Bávaro, 29-31 January 2003)**

Please replace pages 7 and 8 by the attached pages.

contribute to a substantial increase in commercial efficiency and create a climate of trust through the adoption of effective consumer protection legislation;

- (n) Enhancing public-sector performance through the adoption of e-government tools for the sector's modernization and good governance. The steps taken to this end shall reflect an approach that combines electronic information-based services for citizens (e-government) and the provision of online services for the public with the reinforcement of participatory elements (e-democracy). It is necessary to find avenues for the integration and linkage of the various public-sector authorities that will permit the establishment of a one-stop user window to provide citizen-oriented e-government services. It is also necessary to emphasize the importance of citizen access to information on public administration for citizen participation, transparency and accountability in government activities. Special e-government applications shall be designed and used to serve as a catalyst in encouraging firms and individuals to prefer online transactions;
- (o) Incorporating the use of information and communication technologies on a mass scale in the field of health care with a view to improving resource use, patient satisfaction, personalized care, and the coordination of public health-care systems, private institutions and the academic sector. Innovative solutions and options must be devised for providing health services to under-served areas. Another e-health priority shall be the prevention, treatment and control of the spread of diseases;
- (p) Developing and implementing networks, progress performance measures and innovative e-learning mechanisms. The introduction and development of ICTs in various schools and other learning institutions shall be supported through the establishment and maintenance of a human resources network that institutionalizes the ongoing training of teachers and instructors, who are the backbone of innovation. Advantage shall be taken of best practices to create high-quality, readily accessible teaching material from all over the world to deal with the problem of information overload and facilitate knowledge transfer to the national level. The development of a capacity for critical analysis of material available in cyberspace shall form part of this effort. Special attention shall be devoted to multilingual training and to the use and development of translation software. Priority shall be placed on expanding the networking capabilities of regional research institutions by consolidating advanced academic networks and reinforcing national innovation systems through digital networks;
- (q) Strengthening the multimedia sector in the countries. This sector performs a very valuable economic, social, cultural and political function in the information society. The reinforcement and expansion of the countries' culture industries are of great importance for the region's presence and visibility in the global information society and for the reaffirmation of the region's multicultural identity;
- (r) Reinforcing international cooperation in all the above-mentioned areas. Close international cooperation among national authorities, stakeholders and international organizations in all aspects of the information society is more vital today than ever and, to this end, advantage shall be taken of the opportunities offered by regional financial institutions. The international community is called upon to provide technical and financial cooperation at both the multilateral and bilateral levels. The countries

represented at the Conference reaffirm the need for the developed countries to make available the official development assistance (ODA) commitments which they announced at the International Conference on Financing for Development. It is necessary for all countries to comply with all aspects of the consensus reached at that conference. The countries represented at the Conference call upon those developed countries that have not already done so to make concrete efforts to reach the target level of 0.7% of their GNP as official development assistance;

- (s) Establishing regional and subregional working groups on specific topics can allow for a smoother, more coherent and harmonious transition to the information society, permit the deployment of regional integration efforts and help to increase bargaining power at the international level. The Latin American and Caribbean countries are committed, as a matter of priority, to more active participation in global forums as well as in existing regional and subregional institutions. They are also committed to the formation of new and transformation of existing international partnerships through, inter alia, the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Network (LacNet) of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force. In this regard, the countries of the region call upon the international community to adopt appropriate, creative mechanisms to ensure the full participation and representation of the region in these forums in order to guarantee the widest possible contribution to the process of configuring the global information society;
- (t) Invoking the use of ICTs as a tool for environmental preservation and sustainability and, in that regard, promoting their use for disaster mitigation and prevention, bearing in mind the vulnerability of the entire region, particularly small island States with fragile ecosystems;
- (u) Furthering and promoting the development and establishment of performance evaluation and dissemination systems and mechanisms that include community measures and indicators that reflect the efforts and progress made by the countries of the region in establishing facilities for ICT access and use within a community context;
- (v) Devoting special attention to the adoption of strategies and policies to facilitate the penetration of information technologies for the promotion of exports and investment in the region;

The aforementioned principles and priority issues shall be presented as the region's contribution to the preparatory process for the World Summit on the Information Society and its follow-up and may assist the Governments to shape policies and take the necessary steps to build the information society.

The participants in the Regional Preparatory Ministerial Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean for the World Summit on the Information Society, held with the collaboration of ECLAC, are grateful to the Government of the Dominican Republic for having organized the Conference and invite it to present this Declaration as a contribution to the preparatory process for the World Summit on the Information Society and to the first phase of the Summit, to be held in December 2003.