



**Regional Preparatory Meeting
for the Americas for WTDC-25 (RPM-AMS)**
Asuncion, Paraguay, 1-2 April 2025



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Chair, RDF-AMS

Final Report of ITU Regional Development Forum for The Americas Region
(RDF-AMS)

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**ITU Regional Development Forum for the Americas (RDF-AMS)
2025**

***Information and Communication Technologies for attaining
Sustainable Development Goals***

Organized by the International Telecommunication Union, Telecommunication Development Bureau, with the support of the National Telecommunication Commission (CONATEL) of Paraguay Meeting held back-to-back with the ITU Regional Preparatory Meeting for Americas and PCC.I of CITEL

FINAL REPORT

**28 April 2025
Asunción, Paraguay**

1. Introduction & General Overview

The ITU Regional Development Forum for Americas (RDF-AMS) 2025, organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the ITU, took place on 31 March 2025, in Asunción, Paraguay. The event was hosted by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (CONATEL) and preceded the ITU Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) for Americas on 1-2 April 2025.

The RDF-AMS facilitated high-level dialogue and collaboration among policymakers, telecommunications/ICTs regulators, industry leaders, academia, and development organizations. It was crucial in setting strategic priorities for the BDT's regional work plan between World Telecommunication Development Conferences.

The forum allowed ITU and its stakeholders, including Member States and Sector Members, to exchange views on achieving meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation in the Americas.

2. Documentation

The agenda, programme and meeting documents are published on the RDF website ([here](#)).

3. Participation

The event was attended by a total of 168 participants (56 female and 112 male), including 154 (92%) attending in person and 14 (8%) participating remotely. 29 Member States were represented by 112 delegates, along with participants from various stakeholder groups, 30 from ITU-D Sector Members, and 14 others. The final list of participants will be made available on the [RDF website](#).

4. Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony of the ITU's Regional Development Forum began with remarks from dignitaries, highlighting the importance of digital transformation, innovation, and regional cooperation in promoting sustainable development. The opening remarks were given by the following speakers:

- **Mr Juan Carlos Duarte Duré**, President of CONATEL
- **Mr Oscar León**, Executive Secretary of CITEI
- **Mr José Galeano**, Head of UN Resident Coordinator Office in Paraguay
- **Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava**, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU
- **H.E Gustavo Villate**, Minister of ICT of Paraguay

Mr Juan Carlos Duarte Duré, President of CONATEL Paraguay, welcomed attendees and emphasized Paraguay's strategic commitment to telecommunications as a central pillar for sustainable development. He highlighted Paraguay's national telecommunications plan, which prioritizes accessibility, coordinated sectoral collaboration, and the closing of digital divide, particularly for underserved populations. He underscored the forum's purpose as a platform for exchanging best practices and fostering regional development through inclusive technology.

Mr Oscar León, Executive Secretary of CITEI, reiterated the importance of digital transformation for social inclusion and economic growth, describing it as a critical engine for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region. He stressed the need for regional cooperation, actionable public policies, and implementation mechanisms that go beyond policy making processes. Referring to CITEI's alignment with ITU development goals, he reported on

initiatives underway in countries such as Panama, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, Paraguay, and Bolivia. He advocated for innovative financing models and greater public-private partnerships, especially to address connectivity gaps in remote areas. Mr Leon also emphasized the urgent need for widespread digital skills training and effective technology usage to promote equitable participation in the digital economy.

Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the BDT, underscored the growing relevance of digital transformation in shaping the future of societies. He thanked CONATEL and the Government of Paraguay for hosting the forum at a pivotal moment, noting global milestones such as the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact. Emphasizing the ITU's continued evolution in the face of emerging challenges and opportunities, he highlighted the Bureau's commitment to generate tangible impact, especially in support of vulnerable groups including landlocked and developing countries, indigenous communities, women, and youth. He reported that around 5 million Swiss francs had been allocated across 14 digital development projects in the Americas, covering infrastructure mapping, digital skills training, cybersecurity, and regulatory innovation, among others.

Dr. Zavazava also launched the [Status of Digital Development and Trends](#) report, revealing significant regional progress: 87% internet usage and 89% mobile phone ownership as of 2024, both figures exceeding global averages. Youth connectivity was particularly high at 95%. However, he acknowledged persistent digital divides and stressed the importance of ITU's Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, which has secured 225 pledges in the region worth over \$25 billion. He emphasized the need to turn these commitments into tangible projects through matchmaking roundtables organized during the forum. In closing, he looked ahead to the Regional Preparatory Meeting and the upcoming World Telecommunication Development Conference in Baku, reaffirming the ITU's mission to build inclusive, secure, and sustainable digital societies through collaboration and innovation.

H.E. Gustavo Villate, Minister of ICT for Paraguay, extended a formal welcome and thanked the ITU for having Paraguay as the host of the forum. He presented Paraguay as a rising telecommunications hub and underscored the country's alignment with global digital objectives. Highlighting Paraguay's legal and technical framework for telecommunications, he emphasized three national goals: expanding Internet access through evidence-based regulation, promoting digital services in priority sectors (health, education, government, and production), and reducing connectivity gaps in rural areas. He advocated for regional cooperation, particularly leveraging Paraguay's geographic position and renewable energy assets to provide sustainable technological solutions. Minister Villate concluded by framing connectivity infrastructure as the foundation of modern development, with every technological advancement serving to bridge communities and enable prosperity.

5. Appointment of the Chair of the Regional Development Forum

At the end of the opening session **Mr Juan Carlos Duarte Duré, President of the National Telecommunication Commission (CONATEL)** was appointed by acclamation as the Chair of the RDF for Americas.

6. Roundtable Discussions

6.1. ROUNDTABLE ONE: State of Digital Development and Trends - Challenges & Opportunities:

10:00 – 11:00	Moderator: Ms Julissa Cruz, Executive Director INDOTEL, Dominican Republic
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	<p>Setting the Context: Presentation by BDT</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – H.E. Gustavo Villate, Minister of ICT of Paraguay – Dr Kim Mallalieu, Deputy Chair of Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago – Mr Gustavo Larrabure, Director of ASIET Andean Region – Ms Natalia Vicente Vice-president Public Affairs- GSOA
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The first RDF roundtable discussed digital development trends, challenges, and opportunities in the region, focusing on connectivity, regulation, and sustainability.

The session began with a presentation by the BDT, summarizing key points from the “State of Digital Development and Trends in the Americas Region: Challenges and Opportunities” report (accessible through the [link](#)). The presentation noted that universal and meaningful connectivity has become an important policy focus. The report indicates that despite significant progress in the region, connectivity challenges remain, particularly in SIDS and LLDC. Urban-rural divides in digital access are also noted issues. The report highlights the necessity of data-driven ICT policies and regulations to address these gaps. The presentation also underscored the challenges such as cybersecurity, e-waste, and sustainability.

Additionally, the presentation included six case studies that illustrated the success of collaborative digital transformation projects across various domains with ITU's expertise and support. It concluded that while challenges such as affordability, cybersecurity, e-waste, and sustainability still exist, the region is positioned to advance in digital innovation. Achieving this requires ongoing investment, data enabled policies and regulations, and enhanced regional collaboration to ensure inclusive and sustainable digital development in advance of emerging technologies like AI. The roundtable discussions provided important insights and perspectives as presented by the panelists. The main highlights of the discussions included:

- Panelists emphasized the persistent gap between rapid technological advancements and slow regulatory adaptation, highlighting the need for flexible, forward-looking frameworks such as regulatory sandboxes to foster innovation while ensuring inclusive digital transformation.
- Several speakers underscored the unique connectivity challenges faced by countries with low population density and remote rural areas. They called for targeted infrastructure investments, regional cooperation, and multi-technology strategies—including satellite solutions to reach underserved communities.
- The importance of meaningful connectivity was repeatedly stressed—not just providing access, but ensuring individuals have the skills, tools, and services needed to translate connectivity into improved education, healthcare, productivity, and well-being.
- Public-private collaboration was identified as essential to achieving digital inclusion, with calls to reform universal service funds, encourage shared infrastructure models, and align incentives to sustain long-term investment in digital ecosystems.
- Panelists shared examples of integrated digital policies that link connectivity to social programs, including school nutrition and agriculture, showing how technology can enhance the efficiency and reach of public services when properly implemented and scaled.

Discussions emphasized the importance of ongoing investment, policy coordination, and multilateral partnerships to improve connectivity. Digital technologies remain crucial for economic and social development in the region.

6.2. ROUNDTABLE TWO: Matchmaking Roundtable on Fostering Partnerships on Infrastructure Development for Universal Connectivity

11:00 – 11:50	Moderator: Mr Alejandro Herrera, Deputy Director of Telecommunications ASEP Panamá
	Setting the Context: Presentation by BDT
	Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr Pablo Siris, National Director of Telecommunication Uruguay DINATEL- MIEM – Ms Brenda Molida Medal, Delegate from Costa Rica, Telecommunications Network Department, Vice Ministry of Telecommunications – Mr Cristian Mesa, International Coordinator at Directorate of Policy and Regulation, Ministry of Transportation and Communications of Peru – Mr Miguel Ángel Munoz Petrichole, CITEL OAS – Ms Nicole Watkins, Director of Electronic Communications, URCA Bahamas

Roundtable two of the RDF focused on fostering partnerships for infrastructure development to achieve universal connectivity.

The session started with a presentation by BDT providing an overview of the Partner2Connect: Recap on the action framework, noting that \$18.81 billion in pledges have been made by 82 organizations from 39 countries, with a strong regional focus on access, affordability, and cybersecurity. 50% of pledges are dedicated to expanding physical access through satellite, fiber, and mobile networks, while 28% target affordability by fostering regulatory and policy frameworks. Additionally, 22% of pledges focus on enhancing cybersecurity and ensuring safe digital access.¹

ITU's role in infrastructure development was underscored, with ongoing efforts to support broadband expansion, spectrum management, and last-mile connectivity solutions. Upcoming initiatives include the 2025 update of SMS4DC, a tool for effective usage of spectrum, the launch of a connectivity planning platform to optimize national infrastructure strategies and efforts on space technologies connectivity and ITU is also investing in emerging technologies, AI-driven solutions, and space-based and connectivity, reflecting a broader commitment to leveraging digital transformation for socio-economic development.

The following presents the main highlights of the discussions.

- Public-private collaboration emerged as a central theme, with several panelists emphasizing coordinated governance structures—such as national commissions or regulatory bodies—as effective tools for aligning stakeholders, streamlining infrastructure deployment, and harmonizing telecommunications policies at national and regional levels.
- Government-led investment and innovative regulatory mechanisms were highlighted as successful models to accelerate universal connectivity, particularly in countries where infrastructure gaps persist in rural and underserved areas. Strategies included targeted public

¹ As of 19 March 2025 – Source: ITU ([Explore pledges - Partner2Connect](#))

procurement processes, public funding programs, infrastructure-sharing regulations, and incentives such as tax credits or coverage obligations.

- Meaningful connectivity—not merely access—was repeatedly cited as a shared objective. Panelists stressed the importance of integrating digital skills development, inclusive service design, and affordability measures built into infrastructure plans to ensure that connectivity leads to real tangible social and economic benefits.
- Diverse financing approaches were shared, including public-private partnerships (PPPs), spectrum-linked obligations, and universal service fund commitments. Some countries are leveraging these mechanisms to connect schools, improve resilience in disaster-prone areas, and support marginalized populations.
- Strategic alliances such as the ITU led Partner2Connect initiative were viewed as essential for advancing the SDGs. Panelists praised such models for enabling knowledge exchange, technical cooperation, and coordinated investment efforts across borders—underscoring the value of multistakeholder partnerships in accelerating inclusive digital transformation.

In summary, the roundtable underscored the significance of public-private partnerships, regulatory collaboration, and technological innovation in achieving universal and meaningful connectivity.

6.3. ROUNDTABLE THREE: P2C Matchmaking Roundtable on Fostering Partnerships for Development

14:00 – 14:50	Moderator: Ms Amparo Arango, Director International Office of Indotel Dominican Republic
	Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr Willy Carvajal - Delegate of European Union Delegation for Central America – Ms Silvia Morimoto, Representative UNDP, Paraguay – Mr Atilio Rulli, Vice President of Public Relations in Huawei Latam – Ms Amy Alvarez, AVP – International External & Regulatory Affairs AT&T – Mr Roberto Laratro, CEO Millicom Paraguay – Mr Christian Oflaherty, Vice President Internet Society

The third roundtable provided a platform for meaningful collaboration and strategic partnerships for development across Americas.

The session aimed to align resources with real-world needs and highlighted innovative approaches to build sustainable, high-value partnerships. It sought to support initiatives that advance the region's skills development agenda, digital transformation, and growth.

The main highlights of the discussions included the followings:

- Participants emphasized that meaningful digital development requires not just infrastructure, but inclusive partnerships that prioritize local needs, skills development, and long-term impact. Strategic collaboration between governments, civil society, international organizations, and private sector was viewed as critical to build scalable, people-centered solutions.
- Several panelists showcased initiatives targeting underserved populations, including women, youth, rural communities, and indigenous groups. Examples included entrepreneurship

programs, digital skills training, and inclusive content delivery—demonstrating that connectivity alone is not sufficient without capacity-building and cultural transformation.

- The importance of open-source platforms, and adaptable solutions was highlighted. Programs that promote interoperability and public-sector innovation were identified as effective mechanisms for advancing inclusive digital public policies.
- Public and private actors underlined the value of programs that integrate education, entrepreneurship, and social development, especially when implemented in close consultation with communities.
- Partner2Connect was recognized as a vital platform for enabling resource mobilization, coordination, and knowledge exchange. Many speakers reaffirmed their commitments under this initiative and called for continued multi-stakeholder collaboration to accelerate progress toward the SDGs and reduce digital inequalities across the region.

The session concluded with an announcement of the project recently signed between the European Commission and the ITU on Regional Regulatory Innovation for Central America Sandbox with a budget of EUR 3 million benefitting 7 countries in the region.

In a video message, the EU ambassador emphasized the project's goal to create high-impact regulatory models by aligning efforts from both public and private sectors. The event closed with remarks by the BDT Director about the project's future impact and a shared commitment to shape a more digitally inclusive region.

6.4. NETWORK OF WOMEN FOR AMERICAS: Building Connections, Empowering Futures

15:00 -15:30	Moderator: Ms Edith Villalba, Chief, Projects Department CONATEL, Representative Network of Women of Conatel
	Opening Remarks: Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU
	Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dr Kim Mallalieu, Deputy Chair of Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago – Ms Lady Velasquez, Regulatory Affairs Fortinet – Mr Victor Martinez, CEO Welchman Keen, LATAM – H.E. Cynthia Figueredo, Minister of Woman, Paraguay

The session commenced with remarks by Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, BDT, who emphasized the importance of gender inclusivity and empowerment in digital development. He highlighted the value of mentorship and announced the upcoming joint celebration of Girls in ICT Day by the CIS and ARB regions as a testament to the power of technology in promoting dialogue and inclusion across regions. He concluded by acknowledging the leadership of the Americas region in advancing gender parity and reaffirmed ITU's commitment to promote inclusive digital development.

The Network of Women session discussed the role of professional networks in supporting gender parity in the ICT sector. It also featured initiatives designed to equip girls and women with fundamental digital skills, promoting their involvement in digital transformation and leadership roles.

- Panelists noted that closing the gender digital divide requires inclusive strategies that go beyond high-level discussions and aim at reaching women in rural and underserved

communities. Mentorship, representation, and localized engagement were identified as key drivers for building women's leadership in ICT.

- Effective mentoring was described as multidimensional discipline, aimed at fostering competence, facilitating access to information, and influencing inclusion. Programs that incorporate volunteer mentors, can promote participation in decision-making confidence-building.
- Collaboration between men and women was viewed as essential to build inclusive and productive digital ecosystems. Speakers noted that gender-diverse teams enhance decision-making and innovation and urged greater male allyship and active participation in efforts to achieve parity.
- Multi-sector partnerships, spanning governments, industry, academia, and international organizations were seen as central to build supportive ecosystems for women. Concrete actions such as inclusive hiring, targeted training programs, internships, and early-stage engagement in project design were highlighted.

6.5. ROUNDTABLE FOUR: Roundtable on the Implementation of ITU Regional Initiatives for Americas

15:30 – 16:30	Moderator: Mr Oscar León, Secretary General CITEL
	Setting the Context: Regional Director, Regional Office for Americas, ITU
	Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr Nigel Cassimire, Deputy Secretary General CTU – Mr Victor Martinez, Representative Directorate of CONATEL Paraguay – Mr Carlos Baigorri, President, ANATEL Brazil – Ms Isabel Greenup, International Affairs Director, Ministry of Communications of Cuba

The session focused on the implementation of the Regional Initiatives for Americas as adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022:

- AMS1: Deployment of modern, resilient, secure and sustainable telecommunication/information and communication technology infrastructure.
- AMS2: Enhancement and expansion of digital-literacy, digital-skills and digital-inclusion programmes, especially among vulnerable populations.
- AMS3: Effective support for digital transformation and innovation ecosystems through scalable, funded and sustainable connectivity projects.
- AMS4: Development of enabling policy and regulatory environments to connect the unconnected through accessible and affordable telecommunications/information and communication technologies that support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and progress towards the digital economy.

The roundtable started with an overview on the implementation of the Regional Initiatives, provided by Mr Bruno Ramos, Regional Director of ITU for the Americas Region. The roundtable reviewed achievements and challenges ahead of WTDC-25. It covered progress in connectivity, digital transformation, inclusion, cybersecurity, and innovation, stressing the importance of collaboration between governments, private sector stakeholders, and international organizations. Key highlights of the panel discussion included:

- Significant progress across the four ITU Regional Initiatives (RIs) for the Americas, including infrastructure deployment, digital skills development, innovation, and regulatory reform was highlighted. However, panelists noted that digital divide, within and across countries, persists, particularly affecting vulnerable populations, and called for strengthened cooperation and investment to address these disparities.
- Infrastructure resilience emerged as a top priority, especially for countries frequently affected by natural disasters. Some speakers underscored the need for inclusive, climate-resilient connectivity, with particular attention to island nations and landlocked developing countries, noting the high costs and logistical challenges to maintain robust digital networks.
- The importance of incorporating artificial intelligence into regional strategies was highlighted, with proposals to develop regional shared frameworks on digital infrastructure and AI governance. Speakers advocated for the inclusion of AI in the upcoming regional initiatives, emphasizing ethical, inclusive, and data-secure development approaches.
- Tangible national experiences were shared, including innovative regulatory models such as linking 5G deployment to rural connectivity obligations and digital literacy programs. These examples demonstrated how digital infrastructure rollouts can be combined with social objectives such as women's empowerment, education, and environmental sustainability.
- As the region prepares for WTDC-25, panelists called for focused, realistic priorities under four key pillars: resilient and affordable connectivity, sustainable digital transformation, inclusion and security, and enabling legal and regulatory environments. They emphasized the need for regional coordination and partnerships to translate strategic goals into practical actions that could ensure meaningful, equitable digital development for all.

6.6. GENERATION CONNECT EVENT: Intergenerational dialogue on challenges and opportunities in the field of digital development for the Youth in Americas

16:45 – 17:15	Moderator: Juan Martin Alonso, GC Representative Paraguay
	Opening remarks: Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – H.E. Salma Aguero, Minister of Youth – Ms Bernardina Coronel Poeso, Youth leader of the Qom people, an indigenous community of Santa Rosa. Member of the Chaco Network of Digital Content Creators. She belongs to the CONAMURI organization – Ms Lorena Gimenez Dávalos, Generation Connect Representative, University Paraguaya-Alemana)

The Generation Connect session started with opening remarks by the Director of BDT, who informed the forum on the recent Global Youth Summit, highlighting the participation of over 400 young people from 31 countries. He noted the importance of securing the information highway and bridging the digital skills divide and stressed the need to embrace emerging technologies responsibly and to ensure that no youth is left behind, in both rural and urban areas. As part of his remarks the [video](#) of the Global Youth Summit was shown.

- The session featured powerful testimonies from young women leaders across the Americas, emphasizing the transformative role of digital inclusion and connectivity in remote and underserved communities. Panelists shared concrete examples of how community-driven

initiatives, often led by youth and women, are contributing to increase access to digital technologies and education, particularly within indigenous populations.

- Panelists highlighted the critical role of public-private partnerships and inclusive policymaking in advancing digital development. Governments, civil society, and international organizations were encouraged to co-create bottom-up policies that respond to real needs, especially in rural areas.
- Digital skills development was identified as a key enabler to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in relation to education, employment, and to reduce inequalities. Panelists noted the success of youth-focused training initiatives such as AI bootcamps and web development programs, that directly contribute to economic empowerment and inclusion.
- The need for tailored training programs, safe digital environments, and dedicated establishments, such as youth technology centers, was strongly voiced. Panelists called for more investment in soft and technical skills to ensure that young people are not only consumers of technology but also creators and innovators.

Following the generation connect event, the RDF Chair made a summary of the key take aways from the forum discussions. His summary was followed by the closing ceremony.

7 Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony of the Regional Development Forum was marked by reflections on the significant outcomes achieved throughout the event.

The closing ceremony commenced with the closing remarks of Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, who expressed sincere appreciation to the Chair, Mr Juan Carlos Duarte Duré, President of CONATEL Paraguay.

Dr. Zavazava thanked CONATEL for hosting the RDF in Paraguay and expressed his appreciation to the panelists for their contributions to the Forum. He emphasized the importance of open dialogue and active contributions to discussions.

Dr. Zavazava acknowledged the collective efforts in generating impact on the ground and stressed the importance to carrying on creating an enabling environment for the private sector and industry to invest.

Mr Juan Carlos Duarte Duré, the RDF Chair, delivered his closing remarks, expressing delight in hosting the successful event in Asunción, Paraguay. He thanked the participants for the engaging conversations and reiterated the importance of digital development and transformation. The roundtable discussions covered various topics, including digital development trends, challenges, and opportunities in the region.

As the forum came to a formal closure, the outcome report of RDF was announced, with the secretariat to publish the draft the same day.

The ceremony concluded with a declaration of meeting's closure and the encouragement to all participants to remain connected and share knowledge in the journey toward universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation. Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, delivered a certificate of recognition to the RDF Chair.
