

**COSTA RICA STATEMENT**  
**WSIS Forum 2016**  
**3 May 2016**

Costa Rica has been distinguished by its peaceful and democratic heritage. As a country, we focus on education as the key factor to social and economic progress. Thanks to great visionaries we have positioned in the world as a nature-loving country, and respectful of human rights.

As a country, we still face major challenges that can only be overcome by the joint work of all of society's actors. One of these challenges is the reduction of social and economic gaps. In Costa Rica, there are two conflicting realities: population groups with ample opportunities to access housing, health, education, employment and security services, and on the other hand, families that are unable to meet their basic needs. These households suffer daily discrimination and inequality because they do not have the minimum conditions to have a dignified life.

Faced with this national reality, the Administration of President Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, envisioned to achieve "a supportive and inclusive country that guarantees the welfare of present and future generations participating in the democratic process, and rely on transparent and efficient institutional actions."

To materialize this philosophy, three guiding and articulating pillars of state action were established: i) To promote economic growth and create quality jobs; ii) To combat poverty and reduce inequality; iii) and an open, transparent, efficient and anticorruption government.

Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Costa Rica is committed to implementing an ambitious national agenda to reduce social inequality.

Aware that digital technologies are tools that allow us to open more development opportunities, either to generate new businesses, improve public service delivery, strengthen the processes of training, education, citizen participation and health care, as well as to create new income sources, Costa Rica decided to include in its national agenda, concrete actions to ensure universal digital technologies as a tool for reducing poverty and social inequality.

Thus, from the Social Presidential Council, a body chaired by the Vice President of the Republic, Mrs. Ana Helena Chacón Echeverría, it is possible to make an institutional synergy between public entities that are responsible for looking after the vulnerable population, and those belonging to the telecommunications sector, with the aim of articulating public efforts, that allow the establishment of necessary

measures to ensure that the vulnerable population achieves the benefits deriving from the information and knowledge society.

Within this body, and as a result of the participatory and democratic work of more than 11 public institutions, “crdigit@l” was born as a proposal made from the telecommunications sector, to be integrated into the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction known as “Bridge to Development.”

The “crdigit@l” Strategy responds to the principles of universal access, universal service and solidarity, and it constitutes the National Digital Solidarity Agenda, included in the National Development Plan (2015-2018) and the National Telecommunications Development Plan (2015-2021).

This national public policy contains programs aimed at closing the gap in access, connectivity and digital literacy. The expected results from the implementation of “crdigit@l” to 2018 are:

1. Reducing the access gap in 184 districts, where there is currently no coverage of voice and data services, and are not financially profitable.
2. Reducing the connectivity gap by subsidizing Internet services and equipment to schools, health care centers, comprehensive care and nutrition centers, elderly shelters, intelligent community centers or tele-centers and libraries, among others.
3. Providing free connectivity public spaces to Internet services in districts with a priority vulnerability condition.
4. Reducing the connectivity gap to households in poverty and extreme poverty, by subsidizing Internet services and a connectivity device.

This last result is targeted by the development of the “Connected Homes” Program.

This program is implemented through a strategic public - private partnership, in which the State defines the policy, identifies the families, and through the Universal Access Fund, known as the National Telecommunications Fund, subsidizes an Internet service and the acquisition of a connectivity device. Public entities complement this work by implementing digital literacy projects and productive content creation, while the private sector delivers the devices and applies the subsidy to the selected families.

We are proud to know that Costa Rica has decided to travel along a route which will pass on to everyone, without any distinction, a country that promotes access and use of the Internet as a tool to reduce poverty; generates social inclusion and employment; promotes citizen participation and reaps the benefits of the information and knowledge society.

For the Government of Costa Rica, it is an honor to receive, from the international community represented at the World Summit on the Information Society, the award for the “Connected Homes” project as the winner of the Access to Information and Knowledge category.