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| Argentina, [Bahamas], Brazil, Canada, Dominican Rep., Paraguay,  the United States and Uruguay | | | |
| Regional Priorities for the Americas 2022-2025 | | | |
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| **Agenda item:**  Item 8  **Summary:**  This document contains general principles and proposals for the adoption of Regional Priorities at the Americas Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM-AMS) to be held virtually April 26-27, 2021.  **Expected results:**  RPM-AMS is invited to discuss and adopt the suggested Regional Priorities.  **References:**  Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) | | | |

**Summary**

This document reflects the work by CITEL’s Focal Points for WTDC-21, and contains a proposal by the Administrations of Argentina, [Bahamas], Brazil, Canada, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, the United States and Uruguay towards the definition and adoption of the Regional Priorities for the Americas for the period 2022-2025.

The Priorities were identified taking into consideration the thematic priorities (Connectivity,[Digital Transformation] [Innovation], Enabling Environment and Resource Mobilization & International Cooperation) under study by TDAG’s Working Group on the Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities (WG-RDTP), as well as the principles of universality, equity and affordability to expand broadband infrastructure in the context of the digital transformation in the region, focussing on the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

**Introduction**

The following were the Americas Regional Initiatives adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference held in Buenos Aires in 2017 (WTDC-17) for the period 2018-2021:

* AMS1: Disaster risk reduction and management communications
* AMS2: Spectrum management and transition to digital broadcasting
* AMS3: Deployment of broadband infrastructure, especially in rural and neglected areas, and strengthening of broadband access to services and applications
* AMS4: Accessibility and affordability for an inclusive and sustainable Americas region
* AMS5: Development of the digital economy, smart cities and communities and the Internet of Things, promoting innovation

The time has come to discuss and adopt regional priorities for the period 2022-2025, particularly when we are facing a new world seriously affected by COVID-19. More than ever, the crisis has exposed the digital divides between and within countries, particularly affecting minorities and vulnerable populations in every country.

It is abundantly clear that the deployment of broadband (AMS3) and concerns about accessibility and affordability (AMS4) remain critical needs for the region. In this new context, telecommunications/ICTs continue to be a fundamental tool to bridge the digital divides and open up opportunities for socio-economic reconstruction in a post-Covid world, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

To this effect, CITEL’s Working Group on Preparation for Conferences (WG-CONF) has gathered on February 17 and March 17 2021 to start discussions towards WTDC-21 preparations, with a special focus on defining the principles that would steer the establishment of the Americas Regional Priorities.

Document CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ADOPTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITIES (GTCONF/doc. 057/21) presented by the Chair of the WG-CONF outlined 3 draft Regional Priorities and topics that could be included in the formulation of the Americas Region priorities for WTDC-21.

The document proposed the thematic priorities (Connectivity, Digital Transformation, Enabling Environment and Resource Mobilization & International Cooperation) under study in the framework of the preparatory process to be taken into consideration in the definition and adoption of the AMS Regional Priorities.

On the other hand, it reiterated the importance of principles of universality, equity and affordability when establishing the priorities. It also suggested that CITEL provides a level of specificity that would clarify what is expected in terms of concrete and measurable results. The discussions carried out in those meetings also considered reducing the number of Regional Priorities due to ITU budget constraints as well as identifying synergies with the Priorities under discussion in other regions, with a view to optimizing the allocation of BDT’s human and financial resources and the implementation of Priorities at a global level.

**Proposal**

Taking into consideration the general guidelines specified above, the following Regional Priorities are being proposed for the Americas:

* AMS1: Deployment of broadband telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, with focus on Developing, LDCs, Landlocked and SIDS utilizing a combination of new, existing and emerging connectivity solutions and approaches, including fostering the development of Community Networks;
* AMS2: Promotion of digital literacy to enable trusted use and application of new and emerging technologies and services, especially among vulnerable populations;[[1]](#footnote-1)
* AMS3: Enhancement of the [digital transformation] [innovation] ecosystem through connectivity projects, promoting an active engagement of civil society, international financial institutions, industry partners and other relevant stakeholders.

**Conclusion**

More than ever before, the COVID-19 outbreak has highlighted the fundamental importance of telecommunications and information and communication technologies (ICTs) in all aspects of people's lives, such as health, education, work and entertainment. The impact of COVID-19 will affect the path to economic recovery for both developed and developing countries for years to come and telecommunications/ICTs will play a critical role in this recovery.

The Region urges, more than ever, to tackle the gaps enormously exposed by the Covid-19 crisis, specially by enhancing the deployment of broadband infrastructure and enabling people to properly use them in their own benefit. The most realistic way of achieving those priorities is through effective partnership. As per establishing those priorities, the Region will be enabled to find solutions to connect the unconnected for sustainable development in both regional and global levels.

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1. Women and girls, persons with disabilities and specific needs, youth, marginalized communities and indigenous people. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)