

Panel: Digital Economy

Panelists: Gonzalo Navarro (ALAI); Guillermo Cruz, Eli Fashka (CAPATEC); Kemly Camacho (Sula Batsú); Javier Pallero (Access Now); Víctor Martínez (Federal Telecommunications Institute -IFT- MX)

Moderator: Melisa Gorondy Novak – LACTLD

Rapporteur/Remote Moderator: Carlos Guerrero

First Round: The moderator asked panelists to express their views on the digital economy and what it implies within the framework of Internet governance.

- Gonzalo Navarro: For the past 15 years there have been discussions on the implications of the Internet on the economy, and although progress has been made, much remains to be done. The regional regulatory framework is asymmetrical, lacking coherence and harmonization to be effective. It is paramount to envision a friendly and relatively consistent regulatory framework in the region in order to promote the digital economy. As an example, Uruguay has recently signed a modern treaty which includes innovative clauses regulating intermediary liability, data protection, harmonization of customs regulations and e-commerce.

- Guillermo Cruz: There is great potential for digital economy in the region. However, the issue of productivity in digital environments prompts us to think of ways to improve certain aspects, such as competition and capacity building. There are several examples of other countries seizing these opportunities. Finally, it is necessary to consolidate digital industries in our countries which generate innovation and become global stakeholders offering digital goods and services.

- Eli Fashka: Education is vital for the promotion and growth of the digital economy. Education requires work at multiple levels, including Higher Education, but above all, on technical courses that are shorter than regular 5-year degrees. To that end, universities in Panama have reevaluated their syllabi.

- Kemly Camacho: In Latin America the digital economy is dynamic and growing. It is a concentrated digital economy and one of the possibilities is that education plays a key role in the decentralization of the digital economy. The digital economy goes beyond digital business models and technology consumption. An inclusive digital economy requires an appropriation of business models, as well as technologies and algorithms. Staff specialization falls within the competence of local businesses (SMEs) and large

corporations alike. In addition, women in the technology sector must be included in the construction of technology, particularly excluded populations.

- Javier Pallero: Regulatory challenges with regard to digital economy are still unresolved issues in the region. A digital economy cannot exist without minimum respect for the rule of law. The challenge of connectivity (digital divide): What kind of Internet do we want for these future creators and consumers of digital economy? Rights such as freedom of expression, personal data protection or net neutrality need to be reinforced. Government transparency and efficiency must be a priority. Mass government surveillance of activists affects trust in the system as a whole, including the digital economy.

- Victor Martinez: A new strategy that includes institutional changes is required to promote different digital roles. In Mexico, IFT has been commissioned to grant spectrum concessions for different indigenous groups in order to promote access based on their specific needs. This allows people to connect and promotes the digital economy. Consultation processes have taken place within the regulatory model for concessions. Currently, the government coordinates a national digital strategy which includes the digital economy as a core issue in order to promote digital growth in the region.

Second Round: The moderator asked panelists to discuss the social impact of the digital economy and how they expect it will transform work and social relations, among other aspects of life.

- Gonzalo Navarro: The Internet is a catalyst and a platform for development. Through the Internet, social development is strengthened and progress towards inclusion is made. In Chile, 100% of companies with Internet presence are exporters. There are similar efforts in Mexico, Peru and Colombia. Regulatory efforts in the region regarding business models and the digital economy are diverse. There are examples such as the Pacific Alliance and its different components. We need to shift from an Internet of consumption to an Internet of creation.

- Guillermo Cruz: The development of the digital economy within an environment of commercial and economic integration may be an advantage for our region (Latin America). As the region moves forward, all countries will benefit in terms of income and social satisfaction.

- Eli Fashka: Most companies in Panama are SMEs, usually due to a lack of funding. The digital economy will bring success and funding for these companies. It is crucial to promote knowledge and tools. There is great need for small business ventures to solve local issues. Economic integration, the movement of people and capital will be consequences of proper development.

- Kemly Camacho: Implementing the multistakeholder model is crucial to obtain favorable dividends in the digital economy. Inclusive development of countries with regard to the digital economy is a matter which still needs to be addressed. Multistakeholder discussion of critical issues is a necessity.
- Javier Pallero: Transparency and participation of the various stakeholders are essential for a favorable social environment. An unresolved issue is the application of the multistakeholder model in different spaces and not merely to Internet governance issues. The impact is potentially negative unless certain aspects such as telecommunications regulations, data protection and cybersecurity are re-examined.
- Victor Martinez: The international dimension of the digital economy needs to be reevaluated. Governments must facilitate investment and deployment. It is now the private sector's turn to invest to move forward. Users must generate and consume the digital economy on the Internet. The ecosystem needs to build trust and also a functioning and adequate multistakeholder model.