

# **COSIPLAN**

Presidency Pro Tempore  
Venezuela 2016 – 2017

## **Working Group on Telecommunications November 22, 2016**

### **VIDEOCONFERENCE**

#### **FINAL REPORT**

The virtual meeting of the Working Group on Telecommunications was held on November 22, starting at 12 a.m. Paraguay time. Delegations from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay, as well as from the UNASUR General Secretariat and IIRSA Technical Forum participated in the meeting. The meeting agenda and the list of participants are attached as Annexes 1 and 2, respectively.

The opening session was in charge of the UNASUR Secretary General, former President Ernesto Samper Pizano, who heartily welcomed the delegates and stated that it was very important for UNASUR to attain the objective of having a Broadband Network for Integration, which would help reduce costs substantially, enhance autonomous data transmission and support the least developed countries in enlarging their digital infrastructure. He stated that difficulties were opportunities, for which reason after the first invitation to tender he encouraged delegates to reflect on the idea submitted by the Argentine Undersecretary of Telecommunications Planning Mr. Hugo Miguel, asking them to give it due attention to it, as the countries should not fail to secure the resources from a non-refundable cooperation given by CAF to UNASUR. On the contrary, with the necessary adjustments, use them to carry out the studies required to develop a more modern and better quality broadband and digital structure.

Next, the National Coordinator of Paraguay to COSIPLAN, Luis Añazco Franco, took the floor. He made reference to the objectives of the meeting, stating that the goal is to conduct the Studies for a South American Connectivity Network for Integration, a COSIPLAN Ministers' mandate, which are still pending. Mr. Añazco Franco also reminded that in February 2015 the General Secretariat had signed a non-refundable Technical Cooperation Agreement with the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) for 1.5 million dollars to conduct such studies.

In May 2016, the process came to an end and the first invitation to tender was declared unsuccessful, as no consensus was reached over compliance with the tender specifications.

The Coordinator of the WG on Telecommunications proposed that, as a result of this videoconference and the next face-to-face meeting scheduled for November 29-30 in Asunción, delegates focus on the *modification of the terms of reference, tender specifications and CAF-*

*UNASUR agreement, as well as on a new Roadmap and Calendar and on an alternative for the management of a new invitation to international tender.*

The representative of the General Secretariat, Mr. Juan Salazar, informed that the CAF had not yet confirmed the General Secretariat its commitment to maintain the availability of the funds for an additional period, enabling a new call for tender. However, CAF has requested that an addenda to the present agreement be signed in order to formalize the request for its extension and amendments, if appropriate, and to do so as soon as possible, within the present Secretary General's term of office.

Afterwards, Mr. Hugo Miguel, Argentina's Undersecretary of Planning, Ministry of Communications, has submitted "Contribution of Ideas to the Discussion of the Draft Study on a South American Broadband Network for Integration", the text of which is attached as Annex 3. He pointed out that the study could start focusing on the information available in each country, and that each member country could identify the capacities of its infrastructure, services and connectivity costs and specify the demand to be considered. This would enable the tender to be carried out on the basis of a project that takes into account each country's real needs.

Next, the National Delegates participated in a round of opinions about the ideas posed by the Argentine Delegation. The delegations of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay expressed their opinions on this matter.

All the delegations present agreed to continue with the studies and take more concrete steps toward regional connectivity. There was consensus over the statement made by Argentina as to the need to define what the demand was in each country, and attention was drawn to the fact that not all the countries in the region are at the same technological level. The countries held the view that it was necessary not to postpone any longer the study that would lead to the design of either a single or shared network. In line with this, the delegation of Suriname requested to be included in the optic fiber connection and undersea cable studies, as it had not participated in them before.

Toward the end of the debate, the Coordination of the WG on Telecommunications invited the countries to submit proposals and conclusions.

The Argentine delegation volunteered to coordinate the technical data collection process to assess the current status of each country. To this end, the Argentine delegation committed itself to sending a standard questionnaire on November 30 and invited all the countries to fill it in and send it back not later than December 7. With this information, the Argentine delegation will prepare a proposal to modify the terms of reference of the study. Once agreed by the countries included in the WG on Telecommunications, this proposal will be submitted as a recommendation in the next meeting of the COSIPLAN Coordinating Committee (which is likely to be held in mid-December). This proposal was approved by the countries participating in the videoconference.

The General Secretariat advised working jointly with the Coordination of the WG on Telecommunications in reformulating the regulatory documents to be used to support the new call for tender process, such as the COSIPLAN Ministers' Draft Resolution (approval of the new tender

and contract method), Foreign Relations Ministers' Draft Resolution (Secretary General's mandate to sign the renewal of the CAF agreement), Draft Roadmap and Calendar for Tenders in 2017.

Based on the information above, the delegations participating in the videoconference agreed to postpone the face-to-face meeting scheduled for November 29 - 30 and alternatively to meet one day before the next meeting of the COSIPLAN Coordinating Committee.

To sum up, the following steps were defined:

- On November 30, the Argentine Delegation will send National Coordinations a file to be used to collect the information available in each country. Simultaneously, the C and the General Secretariat will work on the reformulation of the regulatory documents above mentioned.
- On November 7, the National Coordinations will send the information on the current status of each country back to the Argentine Delegation and the Coordination of the WG on Telecommunications.
- On December 13 / 14, the National Coordinations will receive a proposal for new Terms of Reference to be discussed during the next face-to-face meeting.

The Coordination of the WG on Telecommunications thanked the different delegations for their participation and adjourned the videoconference at 2:30 p.m. Paraguay time.

**List of Annexes:**

1. [Agenda of the videoconference of the Working Group on Telecommunications.](#)
2. [List of participants in the videoconference of the Working Group on Telecommunications.](#)
3. [Document for reflection entitled "Ideas for Discussion about the Integration South American Broadband Study Project."](#)