

Fifth Regional Seminar on Social Development

Towards the Second World Summit for Social Development: Priorities for Inclusive Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Concept note

Panel V

Digital Transformation and Inclusive Social Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean

Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025

Time: 11:30-13:00 hours Chile

Room: Celso Furtado

Registration and login link:

<https://eclac.webex.com/webappng/sites/eclac/webinar/webinarSeries/register/8976b27a04ed4e128b56bf27f01f2344>

The event will have **Spanish-English interpretation**.

Background:

The World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995 marked a historic milestone by establishing a global commitment to eradicate poverty, promote full employment, and strengthen social integration. These commitments were reinforced in 2015 with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a comprehensive roadmap to fight poverty, reduce inequalities, and promote inclusive, peaceful, and just societies. SDG 10, which focuses on reducing inequalities, and SDG 9, which promotes industry, innovation, and infrastructure, highlight the importance of digital inclusion to ensure that no one is left behind in accessing the benefits of technological development.

Likewise, the 2024 Pact for the Future underscores the need for a renewed social contract that embraces social justice, equity, and sustainability. This pact recognizes the potential of digital technology to contribute to inclusive social development but also warns of the risk of deepening structural inequalities if equitable and effective access to new technologies is not ensured. In this sense, the accelerated digital transformation is impacting all areas of life, reshaping production and consumption paradigms as well as the ways in which people interact and develop in society. These transformations are particularly relevant and challenging for highly unequal societies such as those in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Considering the opportunities and risks brought by the digital era, this panel addresses the challenges from the perspective of inclusive social development, considering digital inclusion as essential to preventing the widening of existing gaps and as a tool to close social development gaps by leveraging technological advances—especially in the field of social policy, and in particular, social protection.

Objective:

In this context, the panel is expected to discuss the main difficulties faced by populations excluded from the digital transformation, and to reflect particularly on the challenges for public policy in ensuring that digital transformation does not deepen pre-existing inequalities in a highly unequal region.

Preliminary program:

11:30–11:40	Welcome Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mariana Huepe, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC
11:40–12:20	Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amalia Palma, Senior Research Assistant, ECLAC Sebastián Rovira, Economic Affairs Officer, ECLAC Ellen Helsper, Professor of Digital Inequalities, London School of Economics
12:20-12:40	Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> María Alejandra Menaldo, Vice Minister of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development of Guatemala
12:40-12:50	Discussion
12:50–13:00	Closing remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mariana Huepe, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC
Moderator: Mariana Huepe, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC	