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## **UN official stresses role of information technology for development at Lima forum**



Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC Executive Secretary

22 November 2010 – Information and communications technology (ICT) has a vital role to play in advancing economic development, a senior United Nations official told the opening of a regional conference in Lima, Peru, today.

“Technological innovation must permeate the social and productive spheres. We are spurred on by the idea that ICTs can help make progress towards a development that generates new relationships among the State, market and society,” Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), told the gathering.

Some 300 participants from 18 countries, representing government, UN agencies and civil society are taking part in the two-day Third Ministerial Conference on the Information Society of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The meeting is expected to conclude with the adoption of a new regional plan of action called eLAC2015, which highlights ICTs as a means of achieving development with more innovation and equality.

“The potential of ICTs to achieve greater productive convergence and thus generate competitive advantages and increase the coverage of services such as education, health and government services represents a valuable set of assets that we must learn how to use,” [said](#) Ms. Bárcena.

“Today we face the challenge of identifying new priorities and proposing a new action plan to step up regional cooperation in this field,” she added, noting that eLAC can help coordinate efforts and the exchange of best practices within the region.

At today’s meeting, Ms. Bárcena also presented “ICT for growth and equality: renewing strategies for the information society,” a document which examines the digital divide between Latin America and developed nations, and proposes strategies to renew public policies in this area.

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