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## Broadband Partnership of the Americas

The Broadband Partnership of the Americas (BPA) is designed to improve access to the Internet and other communications technologies in the Americas. It will serve as a voluntary and flexible framework through which the governments of the Western Hemisphere, multilateral organizations, the donor community and the private sector can collaborate to expand broadband across the Americas.

While approximately 80 percent of the Latin America and Caribbean population has access to mobile phones, only 40 percent has Internet access, with levels in Central America and the Caribbean at approximately 20 percent. Broadband penetration is estimated to be 29 percent, falling just below the global average.

Enhancing access to broadband improves development outcomes, fosters economic development and increases competitiveness. The Inter-American Development Bank reports that a 10 percent increase in the region's broadband subscriptions would boost GDP growth by 3.19 percent and increase productivity by 2.6 percent.

The countries of the Western Hemisphere are taking steps to reap these development dividends. To stimulate economic growth and boost development domestically and internationally, the United States is investing in the expansion of broadband technologies into rural and underserved communities. Many Latin American and Caribbean countries are establishing and implementing new national broadband strategies to expand connectivity.

The BPA will support the efforts of participating countries to improve access to the Internet by:

- Deploying technical assistance and other resources available from across the U.S. Government through the Technology Leadership Program and the Federal Communications Commission's International Visitors Program;
- Providing technical assistance through USAID's Global Broadband and Innovations (GBI) program and supporting instruments;
- Mobilizing private and public sector resources to expand broadband access through USAID's GBI Alliance with NetHope, the FCC's relationship with Connect to Compete and similar partnerships; and
- Exploring alliances with regional multilateral organizations that have similar programs.

The financial and technical resources mobilized through the BPA will be used to help interested countries advance a range of information technology initiatives, including:

- developing and implementing national broadband strategies;
- creating or upgrading universal service funds to finance the expansion of mobile and broadband technologies to rural communities;
- improving international and regional connectivity by linking existing broadband networks;
- collaborating on a regional effort to harmonize the use of digital spectrum; and
- sharing best practices.

The BPA will be managed by USAID's Global Broadband and Innovations Program.