On Thursday, July 31, the Colombian Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) launched Colombia’s Vive Digital (Digital Living) II Plan – a $10 billion nationwide effort that has set two main objectives: become a world leader in the development of applications for lower income citizens in order to lift them out of poverty and improve their quality of life, and to become the most transparent and efficient government with the use of information and communication technologies.

The overall mission of the Vive Digital Plan, launched in 2010, is to:

- Develop the country's ICT industry and infrastructure and generate Internet usage nationwide, as research shows that as Internet use increases, poverty levels decline and new jobs are created.
- Create innovation centers with companies like Google, Facebook and Microsoft that will focus on developing applications for lower income populations.
- Use ICT to become the most transparent and efficient government in Colombia's history.

Phase II of the Vive Digital Plan will build upon the successes of Phase I, and aims to:

- Triple Internet connections from 8.8 million in 2014 to 27 million in 2018, which would give Colombia similar levels of Internet penetration as is countries like Belgium and Italy.
- Boost Internet penetration in households and small businesses from 45 percent to 63 percent and 60 percent to 70 percent, respectively.
- Double the number of companies in the IT sector to 3,600.
• Triple IT sector revenues to $10.4 billion and the number of IT employees to 117,000 by 2018.
• Continue subsidizing low-income families’ purchase of PCs or tablets, and maintain the lowest price for PCs throughout the region.

When Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos met with President Obama at the White House last December, they discussed expanding the bilateral agenda and launched new workstreams, including ICT. Just last week, Colombia hosted the first meeting of the bilateral Information and Communications Technology Steering Group in Bogotá.

In addition, during the closing session of Heroes Fest this weekend, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak applauded Colombia’s ICT efforts. “Colombia has already taken an essential step by recognizing the importance of technology and has better connectivity than many U.S. cities,” he said.

For more information:

Click here to read a recent op-ed by Colombian Ambassador to the United States Luis Carlos Villegas, published in the San Jose Mercury News and titled “Latin America's Silicon Valley: That would be Colombia.”

Click here to read a recent interview with Colombia’s Minister for ICT Diego Molano and The Washington Post’s Brian Fung on how the Colombian government is using technology to close the nation’s wealth gap.

Click here or watch the video below to learn more about investment in Colombia’s IT sector.
Colombiamoda, one of Colombia’s biggest fashion events organized by Colombia’s textile and fashion industry, business association Inexmoda, was held in Medellín on Tuesday, July 22, through Thursday, July 24. According to Colombia Reports, the event, which was themed “Beyond Limits,” had more than 60,000 visitors, including 1,552 international investors from 53 countries and 7,024 domestic buyers, and earned $221 million in business agreements – 19 percent more than last year.

During Colombiamoda, President Santos delivered remarks, stating “Transcending the boundaries ... What a good motto to define this new edition of a show that, like its organizers, is dedicated to breaking down the barriers of imagination to turn projects into valuable realities.”

Click here for more information.

For more pictures, visit Inexmoda’s Facebook and Instagram pages.

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