

# *UNASUR Promotes First Fiber-Optic Grid in Latin America*

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Montevideo, February 12 (RHC-EFE) -- The Union of South American Nations, UNASUR, has joined the Latin American Development Bank/CAF in promoting studies leading to the deployment of the first proprietary and exclusively Latin American fiber-optic grid.

The project "will provide access to communication channels that will be much faster, at lower costs and independent," UNASUR Secretary-General Ernesto Samper said in a press conference.

The difference in Internet speed in Latin America "could be up to 16 times, relative to that in developed countries," in the same way that prices are "20 times higher due to problems with bandwidth," Samper said.

In a year, the initial study will detail the adjustments each country should make "to be able to become part of the fiber-optic grid," Samper said.

"This is not about building a new network, but about interconnecting the ones that already exist," the former Colombian president said, adding that discussions were already underway about funding a project that will be "one of the most important by UNASUR."

Ernesto Samper said that Latin America "needs to generate value added processes and to create

autonomous communications highways to strengthen its independence and cyber defenses.”

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