

Colombia to Have Full Internet Coverage This Year



Bogota, August 3 (EFE-RHC)-- Colombia will have 100 percent nationwide Internet coverage this year as part of a government effort to promote social inclusion through technology, according to Information and Communications Technologies Minister David Luna.

"We're revolutionizing Colombia with ICT, with the appropriate use of technology and the leveraging of government-promoted digital tools," the minister told reporters.

Luna said that Colombia currently boasts 96 percent Internet coverage and plans to reach 100 percent coverage by year's end. "We have 1,078 municipalities (out of a total of 1,102) connected to high-speed Internet, we've reached 10.1 million broadband Internet connections and 50 percent of homes have Internet," he added.

The government's "*Vive Digital*" program, which has brought fiber-optic or satellite broadband connections to remote parts of the country, has been crucial to its Internet "mass-access" strategy, Luna said.

A "*Vive Digital*" kiosk, for example, was installed on Malpelo Island - a rock formation measuring just 0.5 square miles and located 05 miles off Colombia's Pacific coast - to connect a small navy detachment and a park ranger with the rest of the country.

Under that program, more than 8,000 Internet access points have been established nationwide, providing residents of small hamlets with Web-connected computers, printers, scanners, telephones and other technological services.

The goal of that initiative is to spur the country's development by narrowing the technology gap between urban and rural Colombia.

A separate government program has provided more than 1 million computers to public-school students and technology training to over 200,000 teachers.

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