Cuba to make further progress in computerization despite U.S. blockade

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Everyone's right to have access to technologies compels us to perform our duties for its proper use. ETECSA (Cuba's Telecommunication Company) is making further progress in the expansion, diversification, and accessibility to services.

We will be making further progress in the computerization and cybersecurity of the nation despite the U.S. blockade as well as the economic constraints we are dealing with. It is our political will and there are facts to prove it.

These were some of the statements made by Deputy Minister of Communication Wilfredo Gonzalez at the TV program Mesa Redonda "*Caminos para la informatización en Cuba* (Road to the computerization of Cuba)."

When he referred to the core pillars of the computerization and cybersecurity programs in the Greatest of Antilles, Mr. Gonzalez pointed out that telecommunications and computerizations are both part of the strategic development of the country in the conception of Cuba's economic, social, and political model.

He also noted that the computerization process, with all the opportunities and challenges it raises, depends highly on the economic and social priorities of the nation.

Technologies must complement the main changes made by the revolutionary process. Mr. Gonzalez also said that these changes must be done with a great deal of consciousness,

responsibility with the intention of safeguarding the country's defense and integrity.

Another key principle is Fidel's concept of not excluding any citizen. In this regard, the Deputy Minister highlighted that ETECSA has created several spaces and opportunities to allow the accessibility to services with different and reasonable prices.

He recalled that the initial strategy focused on developing the very first investment in places with great amount of people, whereas critical sectors of the economy and society, including the media itself, were among the most benefited at first.

By illustrating with examples, he mentioned the community project of *Joven Club* — some of them enjoy 100+ Mb — and the development of the Internet access from universities. The 60% of Cubans enjoys nowadays free access to Internet from their works and schools.

He mentioned the development of an infrastructure with national digital services as another basic pillar in the computerization of the island. To achieve it, it was necessary the outstanding training of our specialists.

Therefore, he insisted on the need to develop platforms and national digital services that contribute not only to a better access, but also guarantee sovereignty.

He illustrated the aforementioned facts with the 2+ millions users of NAUTA email.

Transfermovil apk — developed by ETECSA in collaboration with Cuba's National Bank — is another example. He said this is a very useful tool. However, it is not being massive yet. Today, only 200,000 citizens are using it despite the number of existing cash cards: 5 million.

As the fourth pillar in the computerization process, the First Deputy Minister noted that "it was necessary to develop all services, infrastructures, and resources so citizens could always have access to them."

As ETECSA expands infrastructures, prices will drop.

As to prices, Mr. Gonzalez highlighted campaigns organized by the opposition to give rise to dissatisfaction towards ETECSA and the prices to navigate on the Internet.

They are the same people who support the U.S. blockade against Cuba and they are fueling somehow the constraint experienced by our country. Their job is quite subtle: "who is going to be opposed to lower ETECSA prices? But our government has explained in details this concept: as the company expands in capacities, prices will drop, simultaneously."

He also talked about differentiated prices in the access to national content as there is a firm intention to boost this sort of navigation.

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