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ETECSA Keystone of Computerization in Cuba

24/06/2019



The Cuban television show Mesa Redonda, specialized in debates and opinion trends, was recently dedicated to "The Roads of Computerization in Cuba". Several officials and experts from the Ministry of Computing and Telecommunications in Cuba participated among them was the First Vice Minister, Wilfredo Gonzalez.

In her intervention at the show, Tania Velázquez, Vice-president of ETECSA, reminded the important role of the Cuban telecommunications company in the computerization process, not only with the infrastructure but with the facilitation of services, she pointed out.

She offered a wide report on the achievements in the increase, diversification, and accessibility of these services since the beginning in year 2000 of the Internet access with the prioritized sectors and the boost three years later with the Internet Rooms.

Further on the process of widening the services she specified that in 2013 rates in Internet Rooms was 4.50 CUC per hour, and 0.60 cents for domestic navigation.

For year 2014 access via cell phones to Nauta Mail was introduced thus broadening the reach to more Cubans. That year did not only saw the widening of services to the population, but a drop in the tariff to 70% on the managerial sector because prices were an obstacle for those first steps, she quoted.

She referred that the Nauta mail offered to Cuban citizens in their cell phones at 1 CUC per hour had an important acceptance.

In 2015, ETECSA took an important step with the widening of Wi-Fi spots to wireless Wi-Fi areas, bringing them closer to the neighborhoods. "And when those wireless areas were opened we went from 4.50 CUC per hour to 2 CUC per hour, and the demand went up. Users not only found connections closer, but they also saw well a significant discount".

The vice-president remembered how 2016 was not only particular for continuing with the strategy of diversifying services enlarging Internet rooms and Wi-Fi spots, but also because in that year was ran the pilot test to begin the Nauta Hogar services and were applied tariff discounts up to 1.50 CUC per hour.

The following year the Nauta Hogar offer was broaden and discounts were applied to navigation tariffs, in this case international navigation while it continued the promotion to access to domestic contents.

Year 2018 brought along as important landmark, said Velázquez, the opening of Internet service in cell phones, and also in that year took place a special offer for rural towns in the case of Nauta Hogar.

She highlighted that Internet in cell phones was really one of the things that has boosted connectivity in the last few months. "We agree, she added, that people appreciate that it can be cheaper, but in these six months we have had an important use of that service."

The ETECSA official also mentioned the introduction of the 4G technology that not only improves the quality of Internet connection but it also provides a greater level of capacity. In this regard she mentioned that there is already a large number of BTS (Base Transceiver Station) that will continue to increase at some important places like tourist resorts, and economic social sites in general.

She mentioned that in this year the new tariff discount for the corporate sector: a cut down of almost the 50% of all connectivity tariffs, which also accompanies the process of computerization of society.

In her speech she highlighted that "We have already reach 5,5 million mobile lines in Cuba; 2,5 millions of them have data mobile access".

Along with Internet access in mobiles other navigation forms have expanded: by the end of this first semester we will also have a hundred new navigation areas between wired and wireless connections that add up to 1 427 Wi-Fi areas, including those in the neighborhoods, and those on hotels and institutions.

There are at present more than two million Nauta accounts and she expressed that there are more than 87 thousand houses connected by Nauta Hogar. This figure will increase with 40 thousand new Nauta Hogar services this year. Also in companies and institutions connections were increased in about 2 500 for a total of 42 000 connections in the entire managerial system.

As for the topic of mobile access, the vice-president commented that they are working some indicators that allow them a feedback regarding the quality of the service. This allows, she added, to monitor when to make tariff discounts and where to increase BTS, among other actions.

This year 3G BTS have increased in more than 400 and more than sixty 4G BTS. The coverage done so far is substantial in both the population and the territories, but it isn't enough, she said.

By the end of this first semester nearly 2,5 millions Cubans will have Internet access from their mobiles.

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