
Cuba Ready to Begin Mobile Internet Services

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The start day for this service is close in the Island, where at present there are more than 1 400 radio bases, 520 of them have a 3G coverage. By yearend the Nauta Hogar service would have reached about 52 thousand houses in the entire country.

All technical needs are already created in Cuba to provide mobile Internet services with quality and security, asserts Tania Velázquez, Vice-president for Business and Technology Strategy of the Cuban Telecommunications Company (ETECSA).

At the television program **Round Table** recently broadcasted about *The Computerization of the Cuban Society*, the ETECSA official said that it was an important premise to have the necessary technical needs. Therefore, “we ratify that in a near date we will be able to announce in this very program the premiere date for this service to begin”, she said.

Explaining a bit further the infrastructure created, she mentioned the platforms, the fundamental nodes of the network, as well as the radio base coverage. Radio bases in Cuba are more than 1 400 in the entire country, 520 of them have 3G coverage.

She explained that in the capital the coverage is almost complete, as well as in the main cities of the provinces, and they keep advancing in the rest of the country.

Velázquez remembered that in a prior Round Table ETECSA’s Executive President, Mayra Arevich had announced that in 2018 the commercialization of Internet service would begin in mobiles. This have been a priority for the company in the last two years.

As part of the preparation for the beginning of that necessary and demanded service, the vice-president invited the population to stay alert for some advice ETECSA will disclose in the next few days for a better use of the mobile

network regarding navigation.

Among new things in the last years she mentioned the creation of the Nauta Hogar service. She reminded its beginnings in 2016 with a trial test in two districts of Old Havana and its ulterior development and expansion by late 2017. She said that at present more than 37 thousand Nauta Hogar services are working, 22 000 out of them installed this year.

She underlined that installation rate has increased and the company's purpose is that this year it reaches around 52 thousand of these services in the entire country. To attain this purpose have been prioritized the places where a better infrastructure quality exist in order to guarantee the necessary excellence to the population that hires the service.

Nauta hogar is present today in 136 domestic municipalities, in 22% of the districts. A recent poll ran by ETECSA aimed at the level of satisfaction of clients with this service showed that "there is a quite good acceptance in this regard, although there are a few complaints regarding the prices, and reaching more places", she explained.

Tania referred that two recommendations keep appearing: to encourage the recharge from abroad for this service –something the company is working on right now and that in coming months they will announce how to set it up, she said - and the selling of modems that can be used in a wireless environment, something that has already begun, she specified.

At the beginning of her talk, the vice-president remembered that telephone lines in the country, reach the total of 6,5 millions for a 58% of telephone density. Of the whole of lines, 5 millions 200 thousand are mobiles.

"We have had a huge leap forward in mobile telephony in the last years to get to more people with a more practical infrastructure", she highlighted. More than a million 500 thousand Nauta mail users log in using their mobiles.

In addition, there are more than a million 700 thousand Nauta accounts which is one of the means – she explained – through which people access Internet.

Besides the services, Velázquez mentioned a group of projects developed in the last years among which is included the collective navigation rooms. If in year 2013 they were 118, located in the main cities of the provinces, right now they are up to 1 713 of those public areas accessing Internet, today present in every Cuban municipalities.

Wifi areas must be added on top of all these efforts. They surpass the 700 and they have represented a mayor leap in the topic of connectivity. Furthermore they have earned great popular acceptance.

ETECSA has created more than 200 Wi-Fi rooms as an alternative, with greater comfort than the outdoor alternative, and also the more than 700 rooms located in third-party areas; that is, airports, hotels, and also health facilities, cultural, recreational centers and others.

Velázquez qualified as very important the work done in the last two years to take connectivity to entities, organizations, companies and to the different sectors of society to which communications play a key role in its informatization.

In this regard she commented on heavy investments design made for the fiber optic infrastructure. This can improve the bandwidth and quality of connections of bodies like the ministries of Education and Higher Education, Justice and Banking System, among many others.

Also, Tania remembered among the breakthroughs that the entire enterprise data systems has strengthened, where companies can also host their contents and, among other possibilities, manage their own services in a safe environment.

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