

TELESUR

A BROADCAST ALTERNATIVE FOR THE AMERICAS

TeleSUR, Television of the South, is the first TV network created with the explicit purpose of featuring diverse programming that is produced by and for Latin Americans. Founded in 2005 by Argentina, Cuba, Uruguay, and Venezuela, and subsequently joined by Bolivia and Nicaragua, the network provides audiences in Latin America with a much-needed space for debate and exchange of ideas through 24-hour programming that reflects the diversity of Latin American society. Daily broadcast schedules include news programs, sports, historical documentaries, debates, interviews, and cultural shows.

As of August 2007, TeleSUR had regional offices in Caracas, Bogotá, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Havana, La Paz, Lima, Quito, Managua and Washington DC, as well as a large network of associates throughout the Western Hemisphere. This makes TeleSUR the network with the biggest news-gathering capacity in Latin America, and allows for broad coverage; TeleSUR currently has a potential audience of over 86 million people. Financed with an initial \$10 million by the founding governments, TeleSUR now offers programming in 20 countries throughout Latin America, and in the U.S. and Europe via satellite broadcast. TeleSUR programming can also be streamed live over the internet by viewers worldwide.ⁱ



According to Andres Izarra, President of TeleSUR, the station's aim is "to advance integration while portraying Latin Americans as we see ourselves" through the production and diffusion of content sourced in the region.ⁱⁱ

A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

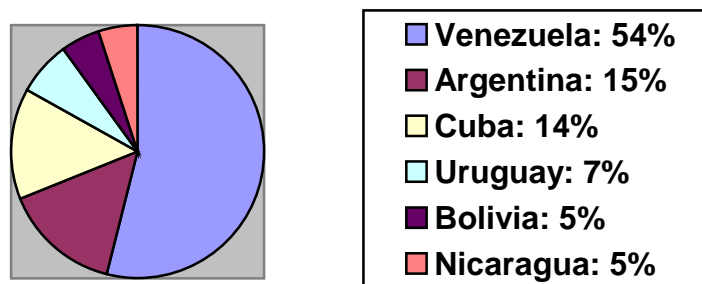
TeleSUR was created to reduce Latin America's dependence on foreign news sources and to provide representation for diverse local perspectives on issues relevant within the region. TeleSUR Director Aram Aharonian has emphasized the uniqueness of the broadcaster, saying: "Telesur is the first Latin American experience in mass television. We have always

been seen through foreign eyes. From the North, they only see us in black and white ... We are a very diverse and plural region; we need to see ourselves in our own way."ⁱⁱⁱ

Regional integration is at the heart of TeleSUR, which seeks to unite Latin American audiences and foster greater self-awareness, while building links between communications industries in the region and those in other parts of the world. Eugenio Bucci, Director of TV Brasil, has said that "we see TeleSUR as having a sister relationship with us.... Anything that is aimed at informing South Americans about South America is a sister initiative."^{iv} He also emphasized that "what is new is not just this television project, but an overall process of integration among the countries."^v

TeleSUR has been described as a wholly Latin American alternative to CNN that goes one step further by providing programming that covers "all themes that have something to do with life in Latin America. Economics, politics, social affairs, culture, history, sports – it is much broader than just news."^{vi}

Ownership Structure of TeleSUR



Source: TeleSUR Office of International Agreements, August 2007

DEMOCRATIZING THE MEDIA

As media ownership has become more concentrated and outlets for the expression of diverse viewpoints progressively fewer, Venezuela has emerged as a leader in the effort to make more voices heard. TeleSUR is part of a larger, regional effort to democratize the media, because it operates as a non-commercial source of reporting on Latin American issues. TeleSUR also features the work of independent producers and directors from the region.

Journalists and communications experts in the U.S. have lauded TeleSUR's contribution to creating a more pluralistic media by disseminating news from a Latin America-focused perspective. John Dinges, Professor of Journalism at Columbia University has affirmed, "I am in favor of initiatives that created additional voices in the news... Alternative looks at the facts can be positive." Of the value of TeleSUR, Dinges added that "if it's being done in order to spread an alternative journalistic voice, it will be good journalism and a contribution."^{vii}

ⁱ "Telesur: 'Another Television is Possible,'" by Jim McIlroy and Coral Wynter, *Green Left Weekly*, February 15, 2006.

ⁱⁱ "Telesur: Building a TV Station and a Platform for Leftists," by Simon Romero, *New York Times*, June 16, 2007.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Telesur: 'Another Television is Possible,'" Ibid.

^{iv} "And Now, the News in Latin America's View," by Juan Forero, *New York Times*, May 16, 2005.

^v "All Latin America, All the Time," by Monte Reel, *Washington Post*, March 10, 2005.

^{vi} "Interview with Adam Aharonian, Director General of Telesur," *New Internationalist*, January 2006.

^{vii} "Latin Leader Rebels Against US-Centric News," by Danna Harman, *Christian Science Monitor*, May 13, 2005.