

DE WEST – January 28, 2008

Opening CANTO Conference:

## **VENETIAAN CALLS FOR COOPERATION OF PARTIES**

President Ronald Venetiaan, yesterday evening at the opening of the conference of the Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organizations (CANTO), called on all parties to work together to deal with the challenges in the field of telecommunication.

- Clifton Saridjan -

Telecommunication has often been high on the agenda of various countries in the past years. The Government of Suriname has also devoted plenty of attention to this sector in its policy. The possibilities of information and communication technology must be studied thoroughly but, more importantly, availability of this service to all must be considered, says the Head of State. It remains a challenge for every country. However, with the efforts of all parties involved and using the right tools, this should be possible. The establishment of an ICT Institute is also near. This institute must thoroughly study the gap between aforementioned technology in Suriname and the rest of the region and present solutions.

Yesterday evening, the 24<sup>th</sup> CANTO conference was opened and will last till Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. It is the intention that all member states that participate in this telecom forum, focus their attention on the recent developments in the field of telecommunication. CANTO consists of 109 members of which 43 including 6 from Suriname, are active members. In addition to telecom companies, it also involves suppliers of products and regulators. This year's theme is *Caribbean Unity through Connectivity*. Telesur general manager, Dirk Currie, who addressed the guests as guest speaker, provided an overview of the telecom sector and the activities of his company. In addition to fixed telephony, in 1993, the company introduced mobile telephony and dominated the market until the last quarter of last year when two new providers, Digicel and Uniqq, entered the market. With regard to Internet, there are also developments to report, whereby the well-known dial-up option is now going in the direction of broadband Internet, says Currie. Still, he says, it is striking that, although many people own a computer, this is not in proportion to the number of Internet connections. Studies show that many consider the rates too high. This year, the company donated 100 laptops with Internet connection to several schools. Currie also says that, although Telesur plays a significant role in the telecom sector, the contribution of all parties in the region is required to realize more for the communities. CANTO was established in 1984 with Suriname as one of the founders. In 24 years, the organization experienced a strong growth and is acknowledged throughout the world.

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Text photo:

Yesterday evening, the 24<sup>th</sup> CANTO Conference, which lasts till January 29th, was opened by President Ronald Venetiaan. At the table, part of the CANTO board is seated. This year's theme is: Caribbean Unity through Connectivity.  
(photo: IMG)

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