

CANTO

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STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR SUSTAINABLE BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

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ATLANTIS PARADISE ISLAND, THE BAHAMAS

OPENING SPEECH

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Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is a great pleasure to be with you here today in the Bahamas for the opening of CANTO's 30th Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition.
- I am delighted to be here with you to celebrate thirty years of CANTO, which very ably represents the interests of the ICT sector in this region, with more than 130 members from 36 countries – and which also plays an important role in ITU. We are very grateful for CANTO's support for and for your active participation in ITU's work.
- I am honoured to be speaking to you today on '*Strategic Alliances for Sustainable Broadband Development*'. This is a subject which is very close to my own heart, and it is clearly a key element in ITU's mission to connect the world.
- Over the past decade or so, extraordinary progress has been made in bringing affordable mobile cellular communications to all – and by the end of the year, there will be almost as many mobile cellular subscriptions as there are people on the planet.

- Here in the Caribbean, of course, many countries already have mobile cellular penetration rates of well over 100%. Just ten years ago, it was half that.
- But while we have achieved our dream of connecting the world's people via mobile, we still have a lot of work ahead of us in terms of bringing everyone online.
- It is truly fantastic that three billion people will be online at the end of 2014 – but that's not such good news for the 4.3 billion people who will still be offline.
- Those 4.3 billion people will still be without access to the most important tool we have ever seen in terms of improving global development – through health, education, poverty reduction, and so much more.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- I think we are all well aware that neither governments alone, nor the industry alone, can bring the benefits of broadband to the unconnected billions alone – and that is why the theme of this event is so important.
- We need to make sure that the incentives are there for the public and private sectors to work together, to achieve this key development goal. That means increased collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as between operators and regulators.
- As the Secretary-General of ITU, the UN specialized agency for ICTs, I have a unique perspective on the power of partnership, because as you know ITU is unique within the UN system, bringing together 193 Member States and over 700 private sector and academic members, as well as regional organizations such as CANTO.
- Our members may have different viewpoints on some issues, but all of them agree that broadband rollout depends on investment, particularly in the early stages of rolling out complex technical infrastructure, where the ICT sector is highly capital-intensive.
- While costs fall once the networks are up and running, we still need to get the networks rolled out first.

- The issue of getting investment incentives right was discussed in some detail at the ninth meeting of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, which took place in Dublin, in March this year. The meeting was hosted by Denis O'Brien, who is one of our very prominent commissioners, and many of you in this region will of course know him, as his companies are very active in this region.
- In Dublin, the Commission's Working Group on Financing and Investment reminded us that just twenty years ago, investments in telecom networks were the concern of governments alone – but that the changing nature of the sector has increasingly shifted the responsibility towards industry.
- In the 21st century, we need to foster public and private sector collaboration; partly due to the sheer scale of the subject – creating broadband infrastructure that is ubiquitous and affordable for all – and partly because the broadband economy also means using networks as platforms to deliver fundamental services such as education and healthcare.
- Because the role of ICTs in these services can also deliver greater efficiency across many areas – from education and healthcare to transportation, water and energy – broadband networks can quickly pay for themselves, creating a virtuous circle of investment, productivity and human development.

Distinguished colleagues,

- As the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, said at this year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Day in May:
 - *"Broadband connectivity is a transformative tool to achieve the three pillars of sustainable development – economic growth, social inclusion and environmental balance. It is a key element of the debate on the post-2015 development agenda."*
- So in shaping the post-2015 development agenda, we simply cannot ignore the vital role that ICTs play – and will continue to play – in improving the lives of every single person on the planet.
- Personally, I have tremendous faith that the public and private sectors will continue work together to invest in, and to roll-out, ICT infrastructure – in this region and across the world – and that we are standing on the brink of the broadband economy.

- Our own work at ITU contributes to these efforts in every region of the world, and here in the Caribbean we have been active in partnership with many countries and in many areas – from broadband regulation to training initiatives, and from cybersecurity activities, to disaster preparedness.
- As always, our door is open, and we welcome requests and suggestions as to how we can continue improving our services to membership, and to the ICT sector as a whole.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- On that note, and in closing, let me take this opportunity to remind you that we are just around the corner from the most important event in ITU's calendar, PP-14, which will be taking place in Busan, Korea, from 20 October to 7 November.
- PP-14 will bring together an expected three thousand delegates from all corners of the world, to discuss and debate the opportunities and challenges that come with the rapid evolution of the ICT sector. Together, they will determine how ITU can best direct its work over the next four years to respond to these developments.
- It is important that PP-14 be as inclusive and multi-stakeholder as possible. So let me encourage Member States to strive to include as wide a range of stakeholders as possible within the delegations – including civil society and industry where possible – and to ensure a good gender balance.
- PP-14 is a chance for the whole world to get together to discuss the future direction of a sector that has become the enabling platform for just about every other economic activity – and I look forward to seeing you there!
- In the meantime, let me wish you all a very successful conference here in the Bahamas. I am confident that we will leave here enriched by the experience, and energized by our determination to bring the benefits of ICTs to all the world's people.

Thank you.

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