

## CANTO 2014 SALUTATIONS (Opening Ceremony)

•The Rt. Hon Perry Gladstone, Prime Minister of The Commonwealth of the Bahamas •The Hon. Dr. Bernard J. Nottage, M.P., Minister of National Security, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas •Hon. Evan Gumbs, Min of Infrastructure, Com, Utilities, Anguilla •Melford Nicholas, Min. of State Information, Broadcasting & Telecommunications, Science & Technology, Antigua & Barbuda •Hon. Ambrose George Minister for Information, Telecommunication and Constituency Empowerment, Dominica •Hon. Alvin Da Breo - Minister with responsibility for (ICT) Ministry of Communications, Works, Physical Development, Public Utilities & ICT, Grenada •Hon. Phillip Paulwell, Minister for Science Technology, Energy and Mining, Jamaica •Hon. Charles Kirnon, Minister of Communications & Works, Montserrat •Hon. James Fletcher, Minister of Public Services, Sustainable Development, Energy, Science & Technology, Information & Broadcasting, St. Lucia •Hon. George Lightbourne, Minister of Government Support Services, Turks and Caicos •Ms. Ingrid Seerattan Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Science & Technology, Trinidad & Tobago •Dr. Hamadoun Touré- Secretary General – ITU

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•Mrs. Helma Etnel, Vice Chair Ag. of CANTO •Dr. Jerrol Thompson, Director of Special Projects In Telecom, St. Vincent & The Grenadines •Ing. Alejandro Jimenez Executive Director, INDOTEL, Dominican Republic •Mr. Reginald Bourne, Chief Telecommunications Officer, Government of Barbados •Mr. Leon Williams, CEO, BTC and Honorary Member of CANTO •Ms. Regenie Fräser, Secretary General of CANTO •Ms. Bernadette Lewis, Secretary General, CTU •Mr. Chris Dehring, Chairman & Chief Marketing Officer, LIME •Dr. Earl Suttle, Motivational Speaker

•Board of Directors of CANTO

•Board of Directors of BTC

•Senior Government Officials

•Members of Diplomatic Corps

•Members of the Clergy

•Special invited guests

Members of the Media

- Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

first of all let me welcome you to Paradise Island in the beautiful country Bahamas. Thanks to all of you for attending this 30th CANTO conference and Trade exhibition. On behalf of the board of directors of CANTO , the secretariat, the whole membership and all attending this event It is with great pleasure and a true honor to extend a heartfelt thanks for our host BTC and all other sponsors who made it possible for us to organize this years event.

Our gratitude also goes to the Government and the people of the Bahamas for their warm and hospitable welcome to their country and the fact that we have in our midst the Rt. Honorable Perry Gladstone, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas shows us the importance the Government is giving to this Conference and in particular the development of broadband as a vehicle to social and economic development of the Caribbean and its citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am taking this opportunity since I cannot be in the Bahamas and not say a view words to my former Chairman and Honorary Member of Canto mr Leon Wiliams the CEO of BTC. My dear friend Leon, I personally, but also on behalf of my fellow direcors of CANTO we would like to express the fact that we really feel very pleased that at this CANTO conference and Trade exhibition , where we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we can address you in your capacity as CEO of BTC because we had to miss this opportunity at our previous conference here in Bahamas. We congratulate you and wish you all the success.

Another person I would like to mention is the Secretary General of the ITU , Dr. Hamadoun Touree, a personal friend but also a very good friend and supporter of the Caribbean region. When I called him he immediately agreed to accept our invitation to attend the 30th anniversary of this Canto event. Dr. Touree I would like to thank you for all your support during your tenure as Secretary General of the ITU. You have really been a true friend and supporter of our Region and in particular of CANTO as an organisation. Thank you for being here since it again shows your strong support for the Development of our Caribbean region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our sector is presently in an era that can be characterized as a very disruptive one and which is affecting all stakeholders. We used to have operators and service providers that were all operating within an environment where all had a license to operate. Since the technology is moving forward we are experiencing a drastic and rapid change where some service providers don't have a license to operate the so called Over The Top (OTT) players competing with licensed operators . There are really no boundaries anymore for these new players to offer their services to customers. The playing field is a totally redefined one but the rules from a regulatory perspective haven't really changed must in terms of reflecting this new era.

There are therefor lots of questions that need to be answered by operators, regulators and lawmakers.

One of the important once is: Is their still a level playing field in the competitive arena?

Business models and earnings models need to be changed drastically for operators to stay profitable since the OTT's are providing all kinds of comparable services for free but still using the necessary infrastructure for Broadband Communications as their means of transport and not making any contribution for the investments in these infrastructures. On the other hand regulators and law makers requesting operators to reduce rates for local broadband services and at the same time demanding higher broadband speeds and high levels of quality of service, which at the same time are a fertile environment for the OTT's to expand their services free of charge to customers.

My final question is one more for purposes of stimulating the thought proces:

Imagine that applications such as viber, skype, whatsapp would have been developed and owned by citizens of one of our beloved Caribbean Countries? How do you think the discussion would be from the perspective of the western economies? and would it influence our way of looking at this aspect of change? And most importantly what have we done to create an atmosphere of innovation within our respective countries?

Ladies and Gentleman,

innovation and the use of ICT's is something where the youth of our region must be involved. It is therefor with great pride that I would like to introduce to you a young man by the name of William Mahler jr. from Belize who is the first prize winner of our World Telecommunication and Information Society Day regional video competition, organized by CANTO. Let me invite William to the podium and as as he comes forward I would like the person from the secretariat to show us his winning video.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All these disruptive changes call for an improvement in the way we cooperate as stakeholders world wide but in particular in the Caribbean region to cope with these disruptive changes. Our Theme for this year therefor calls on us all to work at improving our "Strategic alliances for sustainable broadband development in the region and searching in a cooperative manner for solutions for the present burning opportunities and treats that impact the earnings of all regional operators. The discussion about net neutrality is one that needs to be on the agenda of this conference and we should consider it a responsibility for us all since it will influence the future development of our sector and therefor our communities in this region and even in the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am convinced that your participation at the conference and trade exhibition will be very fruitful and we definitely need to seek and strive for "Strategic Alliances for sustainable broadband development" of our region. Wishing all attendees an excellent conference and trade exhibition but also a great time spend on the beautiful Island of the Bahamas.

May God bless you all and be with us during the course of this Canto conference and Trade exhibition.

Thank You

Regards,

Dirk Currie

CEO Telesur