

- Your Excellency, Mrs. Suzanne Camelia Römer, Minister of Traffic, Transport and Urban Planning of Curaçao
- Mr. Julian Wilkens, Chairman of Canto
- Canto Directors
- Canto's Secretary General
- Mr. Franklin Sluis, Managing Director of the Bureau of Telecommunication of Curaçao
- Members of the Canto
- Sponsors
- Invited Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening and “Bon Biní”.

A warm welcome to all of you joining us at the 33rd Annual General Meeting and Mini Expo at the Renaissance Hotel on my beautiful island of Curaçao. It is a great honor to welcome you to this AGM. It is for me also a great pleasure to see so many familiar faces. This year, United Telecommunication Services (UTS) is co-hosting this event, together with our “Bureau Telecommunications and Post” (BT&P).

This AGM will focus on an interesting and challenging theme being:

'Reimagining ICT as a Tool for National Growth and Development' .

Canto states that this “Reimagining” must lead all stakeholders to encourage creators, developers and consumers to take advantage of the dynamism of ICT and expand their thought process to view all possibilities. This will require a paradigm shift to create an environment which stimulates the creativity necessary for the development of our national and regional markets.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Imagine that you would have to explain the internet to someone from the 19th century, the century of the first industrial evolution. How on earth would you do that? Even though the world changed in that century unrecognizably because of the development of machine power, we would not be able to bridge the knowledge and development gap between now and then in words. ICT has changed our world so drastically already. The rapid developments in our telecom industry and its convergence with ICT has made the world accessible beyond imagination, as information is so easily and quickly exchanged. A well-functioning telecommunication sector and therefore the necessity to have a good infrastructure for fixed, mobile and broadband communications in all of our respective countries is of tremendous importance in support of the further economic development of our economies.

The ongoing tendencies right now is to make things smarter and smarter. This is called cognifying — cognification — also known as artificial intelligence, or AI. AI will be one of the most influential, if not THE most influential, of all developments and trends and directions and drives in our society in the next 20 years. In a few years we will have artificial intelligence that can accomplish professional human tasks. There is nothing we can do to stop this. Therefore we need to wrap our thoughts around this and think how we can use AI to our economic benefits.

Already now, AI works in the background to help diagnose X-rays in hospitals, to help go through legal documents in legal offices or help fly the plane you came with, etc etc. It helps in driving driverless cars, flying drones, in discovering new drugs and in deciding on investments.

In the introduction I stated that reimagining the future based on rapidly changing technology in the long run must result in tools to boost economic activities. This forces us to embrace AI; this technological development cannot be stopped. However to fully embrace this, there are three issues we must understand.

The first one is that human intelligence is not free of emotions. Your state of mind also has an influence on your intelligence then and there. Artificial Intelligence lacks all emotions and will thus carry out any job as instructed under all circumstances. There are clearly benefits to constant intelligence. It is however important that we imagine how we must instruct. It is also important that we think of how to team up the flexible and emotional human mind with the emotionless approach of machines, in order to get the best results.

The second issue is that by putting AI technologies on the telecommunications infrastructure, we will create an environment that makes the fourth Industrial Revolution that we are embarking on now available to a larger population. Even to lesser developed and remote areas. AI will be readily available for everybody connected to the said infrastructure. This means chances for development not only to big countries, but also to nations that have the ability and vision to change themselves to smart nations.

The third issue is that AI will (also) be embodied in Robots and thus will rapidly enhance economic productivity. This might however also cost jobs, so we will have to rethink the skills and education we need as humans in a robotic, omni-connected future. How are we getting our schools and educators ready for this?

Ladies and gentlemen, this all being said brings us to the following:

Artificial intelligence, as an exponent of the fourth industrial revolution, will change our world and economies, again, beyond recognition. Like the previous technological revolutions, the developments have the potential to raise the

quality of life and raise GDP, and this time even in smaller countries and remote areas. However, without sufficient connectivity available to our economies, we will miss out dearly. We as operators must invest millions of dollars in our infrastructure, mostly fiber, to create sufficient bandwidth. The AI revolution will therefor limit our return on investment. However, if we don't do this, our nations will get behind. Our Governments will have to stipulate in their telecommunication policies where they stand on this and where they want to ultimately go, in close cooperation with us, the providers, to maintain the correct synchronization in the execution of all upcoming and unprecedented changes.

This brings us to the following questions I hope you will find productive answers to, in the discussions of the next days:

- What are the implications of these developments for the telecommunication operators and the ICT sector in particular in the Caribbean region?
- Should telecommunication companies be limited to become just the provider of the infrastructure or should they pursuit in addition to this, the opportunity to create value to its customers by embracing AI?
- How can we optimally prepare to face the challenges upcoming induced by developments in ICT, robotics, and in particular in AI?
- As Caribbean based operators, what is our role in contributing to foster national growth and developments of our country and the region in view of the upcoming fourth industrial revolution?
- How can we create new jobs or prevent loss of jobs in our sector?
- How can we generate enough margin to survive?

Ladies and gentlemen,

I believe the coming years will be the most dynamic our industry has ever seen. The pace of innovation will accelerate. It is essential that everyone recognizes that ICT will continue to play an even greater role. We are at a tipping point in our global society; a tipping point where the pace of technological innovation has the potential to change the world for good – and for the better.

I believe that it is time to start rethinking our economy and our understanding on how we will allow people to live their lives in a robotic nation. In my humble opinion we have to start now, by reimagining ICT as a Tool for National Growth and Development.

In that respect, I don't want to conclude my speech tonight without letting you know that our island possesses the region's most advanced certified Tier-IV data center, Blue Nap Americas. It is also ISO 9001:2008 certified. Ensuring 100% uptime of all critical components is a must when enabling customers to extend their enterprise computing infrastructures into our datacenter. Blue Nap Americas is able to deliver these world-class services. Our data center is equipped with dual independent fully redundant 5 MW power plants, and has been designed to meet the growing demand for network connectivity in Latin, Central, North America and the Caribbean markets.

Furthermore, Curaçao is well connected by submarine cables. Connectivity is vast with over 6 major submarine cables connecting the island to the rest of the world. The island provides many benefits. For starts, Curaçao is geographically positioned outside the traditional hurricane belt and major seismic zones. Furthermore, international companies locating their critical computing assets at UTS's datacenter are exempt from VAT and import duties, when providing services outside of Curacao.

Also, being part of the Dutch Kingdom means, that companies located in Curacao benefit from strict European-based privacy laws. Additionally, Curaçao

has strict policies and a apt legal system considering the confidentiality of client data.

Tomorrow Mr. Zabala will go into more detail what makes our data-center stand out from the rest. Also, as a courtesy to our guests, this AGM will conclude with a tour to Blue NAP Americas.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In closing -for those of you visiting our island- I wish you a very pleasant stay and would like to invite you to join our biggest party of the year, as we celebrate our Curaçao Carnival. Carnival is an experience, unlike any other. Be among tens of thousands of spectators alongside the road witnessing an impressive array of multi-colored groups dancing on the beat of Tumba, our official Carnival music. With the insertion of Tumba as the official music form to be promoted and played and the media coverage of almost every important event, Carnival without a doubt became the biggest and most important cultural manifestation of Curaçao.

In preparation of carnival, witness and experience Curaçao's Tumba music festival, a fierce competition for this years' title of Tumba King or Queen, starting tomorrow night, and culminating in a colourful and festive finale on Friday. The festival more or less takes full possession of our whole community throughout the competitions. This music festival is a celebration in a class of its own. There is no doubt in my mind that you will enjoy it immensely.

Finally, I sincerely hope that your deliberations will create more value to the identification of the path our companies should navigate to survive the upcoming challenges. Lets bring our brains and creativity together and reimagine our telecoms future.

Thank you.

SPEECH CEO OF UTS MR. P.T. DE GEUS