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Digicel Emerges as the Chairman of CANTO's Board of Directors

On the 26th of January, Digicel was voted Chairman of the CANTO Board of Directors at the 31st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of CANTO held in Paramaribo Suriname. The new Chairman in the person of Mr. Julian Wilkins is the Head of Group, Telecoms Public Policy of Digicel Group. Mr. Wilkins has represented Digicel Trinidad and Tobago on the CANTO Board of the Directors for the past seven (7) years in the capacity of CANTO Director and actively chaired two (2) working committees, the Marketing & Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility committees of CANTO. Wilkins, who was educated in the UK, holds a MBA from the Henley Business School in General Management and Full Telecommunications City and Guilds qualifications. He worked at British Telecom for 18 years as an engineer before returning home to Antigua in 1994 to work for the Public Utilities Authority as an Operations Engineer. He was first elected as a CANTO Board Director representing the Antigua Public Utilities Authority in 1998. In 2000, as the PCS Manager, he successfully launched the first GSM mobile network in the English-speaking Caribbean in Antigua. He joined Digicel Trinidad and Tobago in 2006 as Operations and Maintenance Manager and transferred to Digicel Group in 2008. Mr. Wilkins reiterates his vision for CANTO by saying: "As Chair, I will continue to work with all CANTO members, large and small, to find common ground that will best serve the industry and our consumers whilst ensuring open dialogue with all stakeholders."

Also elected as Vice Chair of CANTO is the Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC) represented by Mr. Leon Williams CEO of Bahamas Telecommunications Company. Mr. Williams is no stranger to CANTO. He has served in the capacity of Vice Chairman in 2003 and 2005 and Chairman in 2008.

TELEM St. Maarten represented by Mrs. Helma Etnel was elected as Treasurer of the Board while UTS made a return to the board as a Board Director and was represented by Mr. Lyrio Gomez. Continuing on the board are Directors Davison Charles, (Cable & Wireless Antigua), Tim Heffernan (Cable & Wireless Grenada), E. J. Saunders (Digicel Turks & Caicos), John Reid (Columbus Communications) and Charles Carter (TSTT).

The CANTO membership and attendees of the 31st AGM bade farewell to Mr. Dirk Currie who served as Chairman on the board for the last five (5) years. Mr. Currie represented Telesur of Suriname and is the Managing Director of TELESUR. Mr. Currie, in his parting speech at the Opening Ceremony said: "It is the last AGM that I will attend and speak to you all in my capacity of Chairman. I am grateful for the trust bestowed in me and therefore I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you whom I worked with over the last four years and more, serving

the organization. It was only with your assistance and support that I have been able to fulfill the duties as chair. A chairperson, which doesn't have the support of the fellow directors within the board, the Vice Chair and the support of the members, but not the least the support of the Secretary General and staff of the Secretariat of the organization, is never able to perform its duties as Chair. My heartfelt thanks to you all for your outstanding support”.

The AGM continued with the first Caribbean Youth Forum which was facilitated by PIEDATA and supported by Telesur and CARICOM. The forum which took place on the 27th of January, engaged the youths in stimulating tech start-up discussions including an entrepreneurs’ incubation period, and provided expert advice on business development and participation in the youth exhibition. The forum which was streamed live provided a fun, exciting and interactive experience that captivated the minds of the Caribbean youths but also provide excellent networking opportunities. There was also an exhibition profiling innovating ideas and companies.

The Broadband Infrastructure and Inventory Public Awareness (BIIPAC) held a three (3) day workshop from the 27th -29th January and focused on the three (3) components of the project. This project is assisting CANTO members in broadband diagnosis and infrastructure maps, regulatory and institutional framework, ICT awareness and capacity building, as well as public policy and regional recommendations.

CANTO also hosted a mini expo where over 14 exhibitors got the opportunity to display their product offerings. The AGM was co-hosted by Telesur of Suriname and sponsored by United Caribbean Contractors (UCC), Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC), Columbus Communications, Domus Semo Sancus (DSS), Telecommunicatie Autoriteit Suriname (TAS), Huawei and Internet Society.

For more information on the 31st AGM visit <http://canto.org/events-conferences/annual-general-meeting-agm/>

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CANTO is recognized as the leading trade association of the ICT sector for shaping information and communication in the Caribbean. Founded in 1985 as a non-profit association of 8 telephone operating companies, CANTO has now grown to over 107 members in more than 31 countries. A Board of Directors appointed by the membership directs policy of the Association. This strategy is executed by the staff of a permanent Secretariat based in Trinidad and Tobago

The Telecommunication Corporation Suriname, TELESUR, was established in January 1981. As from 1945, the name of the company was “Government Telegraph and Telephone Service”. Our Headquarter is located at # 14 Heiligenweg, Paramaribo, Republic of Suriname. The Mission Statement is to facilitate communication through innovative market-based solutions. Nationwide the company has 7 branches, a total of 957 employees, and a number of customers of 500,000. As Operator for Fixed Networks, Mobile Networks, Internet Service Provider and many more Multi Media Services. While our main equipment providers are HUAWEI and ERICSSON.

Most of our products and services are based on our NICE principle; Network Information Communication and Entertainment, which services we will provide by means of broadband fiber to the home and fiber to the office. Focus will be on further investments in amongst others Fiber Technology, Internet TV, Fixed Mobile Convergence, Video Conferencing, Mobile content delivery, and Antenna/Base Station Technology.

Since May 2006 Dirk Currie is the CEO, and the company’s slogan is: “Keeping us in touch”.