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## Secretary General of CANTO Bids Farewell at CANTO 2015



**Regenie Fräser- Secretary General**

Over 500 ICT delegates convened at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Miami - *a multi-cultural city that speaks ultra-cool fluently* (Hyatt). CANTO's Annual Conference & Trade Exhibition (CANTO 2015), now in its 31<sup>st</sup> year, is a six day event which caters to the regional and international ICT/Telecommunication sector. Delegates were exposed to high profile speakers and presenters including the Prime Minister of the Bahamas, 12 Caribbean ICT government ministers and officials, two Secretary Generals, Regulators and Operators who focused on the theme "Improving lives through broadband innovation". Huawei, a leading global information and communications technology (ICT) solutions provider was the headline sponsor of CANTO 2015. CANTO also hosted two professional development forums namely: the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual HR Forum and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Marketing Forum for professionals in the ICT sector.

At CANTO 2015, Caribbean ICT stakeholders, including CANTO members, were involved in important discussions that will assist in providing a better understanding of the ICT sector in particular progress made with broadband rollout; this continues to be an important subject for CANTO. These discussions will therefore play a very important role in obtaining information and statistics that will show clearly the situation in the Caribbean.

Mr. Leon Williams CEO of BTC and Vice Chair of CANTO chaired the Opening Ceremony of CANTO. The delegates were addressed by the featured speaker, The Rt. Hon. Perry Gladstone Christie, Prime Minister of the Bahamas; keynoters: Mr. Shola Taylor, Secretary General of CTO and Stephen Ma, CEO of Huawei, Trinidad & Tobago. Representing CANTO were Ms. Regenie Fräser, Secretary General; Mrs. Helma Etnel, Treasurer; and new Chair of CANTO Mr. Julian Wilkins, Digicel Trinidad & Tobago.

Mr. Wilkins, in his welcome remarks, stated that CANTO is going through a transformation process. The first, being on the board level with the addition of three women to the board bringing

the total number of women on the board to five; a first in the history of CANTO and a clear demonstration of CANTO's commitment to supporting and encouraging women in ICT.

The second major transition was announced by Secretary General of CANTO; who in her speech announced the end of her tenure as Secretary General of CANTO; a position she has held for the last eleven years. Ms Fräser has worked arduously as Secretary General and will leave an awe-inspiring legacy including:

- improved and strengthened the organization by increasing the membership to an astounding 400%
- ensured that the organization remains relevant and capable of catering to the needs of its members
- maintained seven working committees of the Board.
- strengthened cooperation and collaboration with major players in the ICT sector such as These include the ITU, CTU, CARICOM, UWI, ECTEL, ECLAC, CARARI, ISOC, LAUREATE, the BCRC and IDB among others...
- executed a major IDB project aimed at facilitating broadband rollout in the Caribbean *Broadband Infrastructure Inventory and Public Awareness in the Caribbean (BIIPAC)*
- facilitated and co- created the Caribbean Women in ICTs (CWIC).
- developed the i-Create e-Content competition, the WTISD Video competition, First Regional Hackathon competition and the CANTO Youth Forum

Ms Fräser told the enraptured audience: *“It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve the Caribbean ICT sector, leading this important Caribbean organization for the last 11 years. When I started my tenure as CANTO Secretary-General, I took into consideration the great work done by my predecessors in building CANTO into an important Caribbean organization. One of my main areas of focus was to build on previous achievements and continue to improve and strengthen the organization so that it continues to be recognized as one of the most important ICT organizations in our region, if not globally”.*

CANTO prides itself on developing strategic relationships with all stakeholders in the ICT sector and its renowned, highly anticipated, *Ministerial Roundtable* provides a neutral forum each year, for government ministers to share their successes and concerns and seek solutions from participants which include operators, regulators, industry experts and suppliers. The ministers in attendance were from Antigua & Barbuda, Anguilla, Barbados, Curacao, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Maarten and Turks & Caicos. The two government representatives were from St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago.

During the ministerial forum the participants took the opportunity to share their views on how the region can develop broadband plans that combine strategies and programs to foster GDB, growth, create jobs and stimulate innovation. *Panel A* keynoters were Luis Fernando Velazquez Salgado, Huawei Technologies and Diane McAuliffe, C&W; Ricardo Guardia, Ericsson and David Geary, Digicel were the featured speakers on *Panel B*.

On Tuesday morning, CANTO 2015 hosted the Caribbean Women in ICT (CWIC) panel. The event witnessed powerhouse ICT Professionals including : Regenie Fräser - Secretary General of CANTO; Jennifer Britton - Deputy Programme Manager ICT4D, CARICOM, , Hon. Minister Suzanne Camelia Romer, Minister of Telecommunications Curacao and Mindel De La Torre, Chief International Bureau, International Bureau Federal Communications Commission; and Ms. Ingrid Seerattan Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Science and Tertiary Education, Trinidad & Tobago.

The Operators roundtable dubbed - 'The Innovation Edge Table' was attended with the operators discussing topics such as such as *'Business Continuity: Emerging Telecommunications Risks'* and *'ISO Certification'* The meeting concluded with the signing of a MOU between Mr. Julian Wilkins, CANTO Chairman and Dr. Ahmad Aly Khan Director Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC)

Regulating Innovation was the title of the Regulators' forum, where Regulators and experts took to the stage to advise the delegates on topics such as: Network Performance-an Operators Competitive Differentiator; Considerations for Maximizing Return on your Spectrum Investments; Regulatory Frameworks that facilitates Innovation; Broadband adoption and innovation in ECTEL Member States; and Exploring the Promise of a Bill and Keep Regime for Mobile Call Termination, The trade exhibition displayed the spectrum of communications technologies, offering in-depth information on the latest developments in voice, data, image, and multimedia captured in 62 booths. Ericsson won the best exhibit booth with C&W business coming in second place.

The members of the seven CANTO working committees namely Corporate Social Responsibility, Disaster Recovery Planning Financial Advisory, Human Resource, Marketing & Communications, Regulation & Emerging Technologies and Supplier/Vendor met to discuss CANTO affairs in their respective areas and also charted the way forward for even more projects to make the CANTO brand more robust.

Another exciting event was the i-Create Hackathon Annual CODE 1.0 (Caribbean Organized Developers and Entrepreneurs) under the theme: "Crack it, Hack it, Code it". This was CANTO's first onsite regional software design and developer competition sponsored by DSS and coordinated by PIEDATA. The 48 hour coding contest brought together five team finalists from the Caribbean region. The teams were given the opportunity to develop a polling platform for the USA 2016 elections using IBM WATSON - a state of the art artificial intelligence technology.

Team *Jamrock* out of Jamaica came in first place followed by *Codeit* in second and *Betas Side* in third place, both from Belize. The two other teams making the finals were *Apttastic* and *Adept* both out of Suriname.

CANTO 2015 would not be complete without an update on the Broadband Infrastructure Inventory and Public Awareness in the Caribbean (BIIPAC) Project. Three of the project's four components are now complete comprising the Broadband Diagnostic and Infrastructure Maps Component, the Review of legal and regulatory frameworks and current sector trends Component and the ICT Awareness and Capacity building programs component. The final component, entitled Public Policy recommendations for the design of national broadband strategies will be completed by December 31, 2015, after which a report will be forwarded to the CARICOM Heads of Government. A component 4 workshop will be held in January, 2016 at CANTO's 32nd Annual General Meeting in Haiti.

The social networking events have become an integral part of CANTO's conference and trade exhibitions and allow patrons to unwind and network in a relaxed setting. Each night the delegates were treated to plethora of great food and were entertained by the pulsating rhythms of the Impulse Band.

CANTO 2015 closed with the 8th Annual Caribbean Human Resource Forum and the 2nd Annual Marketing Forum (30<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> July). The Human Resource forum focused on Aligning Workforce, Culture and Business Strategies in a "Networked Age" and The Marketing forum delved into "Customer Experience Management to Increase Loyalty and Profitability"

CANTO 2015 was a success and the event would not have been possible without the support of Headline Sponsor- Huawei; Gold Sponsors – BTC and Ericsson; Bronze Sponsor - ZTE,; Other Sponsors - C&W Business, Digicel, Juniper, ICANN, ARIN, LACNIC, ATNI, Talari, Hyundai Mobile/Vitelco, Starbridge, Nutanix, ISOC, Mitel, MV Communications, SES, Anixter, CIENA, TMCELL, Cerillion, DSS, Telesur, UCC and BTL. The next major event of CANTO will be the 32<sup>nd</sup> AGM in Haiti hosted by Digicel in January of 2016.

For more information on CANTO 2015 visit [www.canto.org](http://www.canto.org)

## **End**

*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 123 members in more than 34 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.*