



## 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition

16<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Opening Ceremony Address

Teresa Wankin, Secretary General, CANTO

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to CANTO’s 33rd Annual Conference & Trade Exhibition. We are indeed happy that you have taken the decision to be with us and share in the Punta Cana ICT experience. I give you the assurance that you would not regret this.

I am sure you would agree that we live in an ICT world and that the use of social media as a source of information and as a means for communication is unquestionable. Social Media has transformed our lives and opened up the world around us. Daily navigation of any social media platform is like second nature to us. Upon your arrival in Punta Cana, I am sure that both the CANTO app and Hard Rock Hotel app may have been actively engaging your attention....and they should be.

Tonight, I want to take you on a voyage of “**WHY – WHY CANTO** ... just a few reasons **why** this industry group is essential to the advancement of the Caribbean

Region. Starting with how we set the Agenda and ending with **why** we throw the best parties ever - my hope is that at the end you will see **why** your involvement in CANTO is key to the regional development of the sector.

**Agenda Setting** - At CANTO, there is a holistic approach to how we set our agenda. All are welcomed and all have an opportunity to have a say. Thus, we benefit from the wealth of perspectives in every meeting or interaction, be it regulators, policy makers or operators. This all-inclusive approach facilitates better strategy and strategic direction for the region. It allows all stakeholders to enjoy active participation, with CANTO as the agent for change in the ICT space.

A cursory glance at our daily schedule would reflect the theme of *Reimagining ICT as a tool for Regional Growth and Development* and engage us on topics such as Big Data, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and Cyber security. Of course, setting the agenda for change includes sessions that deal with strengthening the policy making and regulatory environment through our capacity building initiatives with GSMA.

**Next, I want to talk about our Leadership Role** -Take a look around - have you noticed the caliber of persons which this Conference and Trade Exhibition will give you access to. I can proudly boast that we are leaders at CANTO. Our leaders are continuously active and engaged in moving the industry forward. Ministers, CEOs, Regulators - themovers and shakers of the ICT industry, talk and exchange ideas at every opportunity, on the panels, in the corridors, even during the breaks and at the networking sessions.

Our vibrant, pioneering conversations and contributions force leaders to consider new options, different alternatives and benefit from constant consultation and collaboration.

This is how we balance ICT advancement with economic challenges. *This is how we seek to manage disruptive technologies so that the political will of the Governments is balanced against an environment that promotes growth and development of the industry.* These are just some of the grappling issues our leaders continue to navigate for the benefit of the region.

**On the relevance of CANTO** - CANTO continues to offer its members and delegates the opportunity to share their journeys along the ICT spectrum in an open, and transparent forum. While advances in technology may seem universal, the individual challenges that we all face on a day to day basis may seem daunting and silo like. That is until you are in a room filled with like-minded persons who are on the same journey – and this usually happens at a CANTO Conference. We break down these silos by ensuring that competitors leave the competition behind for four days to focus on the growth and development of the industry- *and this is how we ensure that the regional ICT sector remains stable and reliable amid any volatility which may exist.*

### **New products and Services**

Why go online and do a google search to find out about innovation in ICT products and services when you can just be a part of CANTO. If you have not seen some of the demonstrations in the Exhibition hall – **you have not seen the future.** The biggest and best of brands and the best of technical representatives can be found right here on the exhibition floor; from operators like Cable and Wireless to innovators like Huawei, Ericsson ZTE and Alteryx; vendors and service providers

like Calix, Alepo, Power & Tel and many others, they provide an opportunity, through their exhibits, to touch and feel the technology. And here is a special message to operators in the room – visit the booths, learn about the products and services, fill out your bingo cards and receive a special gift from Aliv and the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, British Virgin Islands.

**Our advocacy does not end on the Conference floor.** The work of the Respective Committees, continue to engage a wide cross section of stakeholders on the issues facing the region. Through our annual Hackathon and video competitions, we engage the region application developers and provide an opportunity for their skills to be showcased to the world. If neither of these appeal to you be sure to find out about our various committees who work year-round to keep the CANTO flag flying high.

CANTO is you, so the CANTO experience offers a variety of ways to maximize your participation and get your voice heard. Have you downloaded the CANTOApp? Or spoken to someone from our newly introduced media hub. If you have not done so, please take some time to do this. The app provides information on the event in the palm of your hand and even has some fun engagement activities. The media hub processes the multitude of information so you can distribute it efficiently and quickly to your respective companies and countries.

Additionally, CANTO offers daily news, reviews, interviews and releases which is distributed throughout the region and internationally be sure to ask about these opportunities and how you can be a part of the network to increase your brand visibility by advertising in our Cancion magazine.

**No one can party like us** - And yet, as I conclude tonight, I must end with our partying expertise, and **why** our events have that key differentiator. If we want to be successful, we need to build that database of faces we can identify outside of social media - I make no excuses for this. Our social events are essential for the lighter moments and allow delegates to experience the total **CANTO effect**. This year's networking events are skillfully planned and made possible through the kind sponsorship of Huawei, Ericsson, Amdocs and Cyient.

So, at the end of the day just when you feel a bit saturated or overwhelmed, check the Mobile app for the social engagement of the moment. My advice to you. Don't miss it. You may just be missing the best night of food, cultural immersion, music and partying with the CANTO ICT Network.

On behalf of the Secretariat Staff and the Board of Directors, I thank you for your indulgence. Have a great CANTO 2017.