



COMMONWEALTH OF
PUERTO RICO

Telecommunications Regulatory Board
Office of the Chairman

**CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICACIONES
ORGANIZATIONS (CANTO)**

**32nd Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition
San Juan, Puerto Rico
31st July 2016**

STATEMENT BY JAVIER RÚA-JOVET

**PUERTO RICO TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY BOARD CHAIRMAN
REGULATEL VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Good afternoon, Excellencies and Colleagues.

On behalf of the Governor of the COMMONWEALTH of PUERTO RICO, as Chairman of the Puerto Rico Telecommunications Regulatory Board (PRTRB), and as Vice Chair of REGULATEL, the Latin American Forum of Telecommunications Regulators, I join and reiterate all salutations of protocol; I welcome all ministers, dignitaries, officials and private executives present at this 32nd Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition of the CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICACIONES ORGANIZATIONS (CANTO).

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of my honorable colleague, Associate Member of the Board Gladys Maldonado, an attorney and engineer, a woman in ICT who will also share her career experience here at CANTO.

Precisely at a time when some have said no to Puerto Rico, CANTO has said yes. **Thank you, Chairman Wilkins for bringing CANTO to Puerto Rico.** Holding this Conference and Trade Exhibition in our soil this year is doubly significant, as it occurs precisely during the 20th Anniversary of Puerto Rico's pro-competitive telecommunications sector reforms and the creation of our agency, as guardian of the freed telecom market.

A special salute to Madame Secretary General Teresa Wankin, who has allowed us to collaborate with her and her excellent team towards the realization of what I know will be CANTO's best Annual Conference as of yet. Madame Secretary General, thank you for your leadership, your insight and your friendship. I have collaborated with several hemispheric organizations during the past 3 years, and no partnership has been as effortless as our relationship with you and your staff. You run a tight ship and I congratulate you.

A few words:

Real-time international cooperation is possible today, perhaps for the first time in history, thanks to the information and communication technologies (ICTs) that all of us here work to promote and expand.

International communication, whether via phone, email or Internet applications, is today truly simple and seamless. Yet despite this fact, the Caribbean, as a force and as a voice, is clearly not as coherent as it could. And I do not believe this is due only to geographic barriers or the multiple languages spoken. I think it's more an issue of will and self-definition.

For example, the Bahamas and Bermuda are clearly Caribbean countries even though neither is in the Caribbean Sea. Most will naturally accept a definition of Caribbean which includes Cuba or Puerto Rico, given our island-country geographies, and perhaps our mixed Taino, African and European heritage. REGULATEL is comprised of 23 members, including many Caribbean-sea-bordering states, namely Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela.

Would we, as quickly, include Venezuela, so similar to Puerto Rico culturally and ethnically and so close to Trinidad and Tobago geographically in the definition of Caribbean? And do we ever think of Guatemala as a Caribbean country? Clearly, there are core Caribbean island-countries, and then many others, whose Caribbean identity is perhaps overpowered by their Latin-American one. Well, I can affirm that Puerto Rico is equally Latin-American and Caribbean, with our fair share of American. As a cultural and geographic crossroads we are a natural venue for this meeting.

We know you will all feel at home, because you are home.

What is also evident is that an inclusive Greater Caribbean agenda is an ambitious and complex concept, and there is always danger of overreach given the diverse natures of our countries. But history is quite clear that historically non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean institutions like CANTO, and others present here such as ECTEL and CTU have always been leaders in these types of efforts, and therefore are natural leaders towards a future of further Caribbean collaboration and integration. CANTO's vision is in fact already hemispheric, as it includes membership from as far south as Uruguay, as northerly as Canada and across the Atlantic in the U.K., Ireland and beyond.

Herein lies the importance of the Annual Conference that we inaugurate today. CANTO is much more than a multilateral Caribbean ICT authority; it is a place to build lasting human contacts; a precious medium to unite our voices in a coherent and purposeful manner.

It is an invaluable opportunity to think and act, as we say in Spanish, as “*Caribeños*”, as “*Antillanos*”, as Antilleans in ICTs with a global perspective.

We are proud to have formally joined the CANTO family as hosts and as members. We have a great deal to learn from all of you, and we humbly believe that have things to share. We face many similar issues, from cybersecurity to consumer protection. We all want the fastest and most stable broadband possible, for the largest possible number of our citizens, at the best possible price for our consumers. Like you, we strive for excellence. Like you, we value educated and concerted action.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico I reiterate our deep gratitude for your presence here in San Juan.

CANTO can always count on Puerto Rico to contribute in any way we can to this grand vision of a focused Caribbean and hemispheric ICT agenda.

Again: Welcome to Puerto Rico!

And thank you.