

Chairman's speech for Opening Ceremony Panama 2018

Thank you for your welcome remarks Madam Secretary General.

Ladies and Gentlemen good evening.

It is indeed a great pleasure to welcome all ICT stakeholders to CANTO 2018 in wonderful Panama City. Located at the Pacific entrance of the Panama Canal, Panama City has so much to offer with its charming mix of the old and the new....the Old Quarter and the Urban Centre, its many architectural styles, its beautiful skyline and of course its cultural diversity. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Panama on reaching the World Cup for the first time, this was a significant achievement.

We are delighted to be hosting our conference in Central America since this demonstrates and highlights the reach of our organization.

I am humbled to stand here once again as Chair of the CANTO conference and exhibition; a most unique experience and a unique event that brings all ICT stakeholders together.

As most of you know, I am from the beautiful Island of Antigua and Barbuda - famous for its 365 stunning beaches, one for every day of the year. I am guessing that most of you knew this already but just in case you needed a reminder!

On behalf of the CANTO Board of Directors, I extend warmest thanks to all our sponsors and exhibitors. We truly value our sponsors and exhibitors and we look forward to networking with you over the next few days.

FCC Chairman

If you have been attending CANTO for the past 2-3 years you would have noticed that we have been attracting several high calibre speakers to this conference and this year is no exception. We are honoured to have with us today, for the first time, the Chairman of the FCC Mr. Ajit Pai. Chairman Pai – it's great to have you here at CANTO – welcome to you and your team!

Ladies and gentlemen, for telecom operators in the Caribbean it's been another challenging year - recovering from devastating super hurricanes, competing against unregulated services and the ongoing pressure to continually upgrade our

networks to provide more speed and more bandwidth. Although the sector faces many challenges there is cause for optimism. I believe that collaboration and cooperation with key stakeholders are key to building a sustainable and profitable industry. If you look at our program agenda you will see many different key stakeholders at this CANTO conference; something that makes us very unique.

Data protection

This year Data Protection has become a significant issue. Media reports indicated that SCL Group the parent company of Cambridge Analytica has boasted on its website of managing and/or assisting election campaigns in some of our Caribbean Islands.

Bloomberg in March 2017 reported that SCL has left a “long trail of subterfuge and dubious dealings” by using its “psychographic data models” to sway undecided voters by targeting people’s social media profiles and serving up messages and ads based on their perceived biases.

These are indeed strange times where it seems just about anything is technologically possible.

In 1968, less than one week before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a sermon at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. Dr. King noted that although we were embarking on a technology revolution many were blind to the changes it would bring; he stressed that there would need to be some sort of moral framework.

Ladies and Gentlemen in today’s telecommunications world that moral framework would be reflected in a balanced regulatory framework. However, in the Caribbean regulated network operators currently compete in a world with companies that are unregulated. In the current environment it would be a challenge to boast of a moral framework.

Dr. King’s insightful observation, more than 50 years ago, remains even more relevant in today’s world.

Disaster Risk Management

The hurricane season is with us once again! The devastating hurricanes of 2017 underline the fundamental importance of telecoms network infrastructure and the critical role that they play in today's society. The hurricanes are a powerful reminder to the world of social media, that **without telecoms infrastructure nothing else will work!**

The recent GSMA Publication "Mobile Industry - impact and response in the Caribbean" highlights the impact of the 2017 hurricanes – it concludes that:

- **More efficient and established coordination** processes for network restoration, supported by efficient regulatory frameworks, are needed to ensure an even Mobile Network Operators response and rapid restoration

The GSMA goes on to say and I Quote "*Policymakers and regulators should consider how they can better support the telecommunications industry to make the investment it needs to be more resilient in the future*". End of quote.

Capacity Building

Speaking of the GSMA, CANTO has been focused on capacity building over the last few years. On Wednesday we launch an exciting and new capacity building session entitled '*leveraging mobile to achieve Sustainable Development Goals*' – this session is being hosted by the GSMA for the first time anywhere in the world and is accredited by the UK Telecommunications Academy.

Directors

Ladies and Gentlemen I must thank my Directors for their support. Allow me to take this opportunity to publicly thank two of my Directors who left their organisations earlier this year. First my Vice Chair Rochelle Cameron who served with distinction on the Board of Directors. Rochelle was always nominated to give the vote of thanks at the conference which she did with poise and elegance. Another distinguished lady was my colleague at Digicel Corinne Philip who, whilst

she served on the Board for a relatively short period, added great value in our policy discussion at Board meetings.

I welcome to the Board David Cox who was nominated as Vice Chair representing Cable & Wireless Grenada (please stand). David we are very much looking forward to your contributions and experience in policy making. It is my pleasure to also welcome my colleague Desha Clifford representing Digicel Turks and Caicos Islands (please stand). Desha brings to the Board a wealth of experience in the legal and regulatory field.

A special thank you to Directors:

Helma Etnel, Telem, St. Maarten, our Treasurer

Charles Carter, TSTT, Trinidad & Tobago (who officially retired from TSTT on the 30th June)

Melesia Sutherland, representing Cable & Wireless Antigua & Barbuda

Delreo Newman, representing GT&T, Guyana,

Lyrío Gomez, UTS, Curacao

And Mike Antonius, Telesur, Suriname

Thank you, Directors, for your continued support and dedication to CANTO.

CANTO Delegates - I wish all of you a productive and successful week – let's collaborate and work together. Let's make this the best conference ever!

Thank you and God Bless!

Julian Wilkins

CANTO Chairman