

34th Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition

July 22nd to 25th 2018

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, Panama

Opening Ceremony Welcome Address

Teresa Wankin, Secretary General, CANTO

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome - to CANTO's 34th Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition, where, you will encounter stimulating and thought-provoking conference sessions and a meaningful array of products and services on the exhibition floor.

I wish to share two quotes with you, the first from Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and reads - *"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent - It is the one that is the most adaptable to change"*;

The second quote is from Eric Pearson, and states - *"It's no longer the big beating the small, but the fast beating the slow"*.

Isn't it amazing that these quotes are applicable today to technology that could not have been foreseen just ten years ago.

I think of these quotes when I consider our theme for this year's Conference
“Guiding Digital Adoption to Lead the Global Market“.

Adaptability and speed are key drivers to transforming and adopting new digital norms, - **we must** be adaptable and nimble in order to achieve adoption.

Within a global context our members are, relatively speaking, small and operating in small markets, but we cannot let this stop us from pressing forward to be a force in the world. Size is not always the determining factor, we must be **swift**, and we must be **timely** in our responses and adoption.

In turning our attention to Digital Adoption, we note that many of our jurisdictions have in recent years focused on Digital Transformation. Governments are seeking to take more of their services online, and utilizing technology in education, healthcare and the delivery of services to citizens. Mechanisms and platforms are needed to push adoption, because, without adoption, digital transformations will not have the desired effect of uplifting our countries economically and socially.

At CANTO, we have been engaging in some exciting initiatives that are in keeping with digital transformation and adoption such as:

- the refocusing of our video competition to promote the use of digital technology among youths - and I must acknowledge this year's winner **Jamal Witty**, from the University of Belize with his winning video - **How Can I Enable the Positive Use of Artificial Intelligence for All?**
- I am proud to announce that the Sonar mobile application developed at the CANTO hackathon in July 2017 is currently being tested in St. Maarten and Haiti and I urge more countries to engage in this testing phase. Please visit the PieData Booth and sign up to test this remarkable product.
- Delegates, you will experience the launch of our inaugural CANTO Innovation Awards recognizing the work and contributions of our members blazing a trail within the ICT sector and contributing tremendously to the growth and development of the industry. On behalf of CANTO, I want to recognize the work of the Marketing and Communication Committee for bringing these awards to fruition. I also want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Judges - Dr. Hopeton Dunn, Ms. Jennifer Briton, Dr. Kim Mallalieu and Mr. Dirk Currie. Thank you for your kind service.

I am so excited about our Conference Agenda and Exhibition Showcase. In response to our **membership feedback**, we have included several new

features to the event confirming that your ideas and comments are instrumental in helping us to enhance the value of this premier platform.

We listened to you, our **regulators** and enhanced our capacity building efforts by collaborating with the GSMA to deliver a two-day workshop on Leveraging Mobile to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

We have listened to you our **Sponsors & Exhibitors** – you will now see lunch in the exhibition hall and account managers who will assist you in meeting the stakeholders. The media hub and lounge on the exhibition floor will ensure that your message is delivered to your customers in the region.

We have listened to you our **Members and ICT Ministers** who are charged with charting the direction of the ICT Sector. Our agenda reflect your comments and in addition to the international and local experts to address us, we have used the topics suggested by you to further enhance the value you derive from CANTO.

And, Of course we have also listened to **ourselves – women** - to ensure that we are supported and empowered in the digital space, we have also redesigned the women's forum on Wednesday.

I take this opportunity to remind you of CANTO's mission, which reads:

“Influence the innovation and development of ICT solutions for the benefit of members by developing, navigating and leveraging relationships with all stakeholders.

CANTO is here for its members, to be responsive, adaptable and nimble in providing support and advocating on your behalf.

We continue to work towards ICT growth and development across the region and to bring the various stakeholders together to dialogue and collaborate on the issues that we are faced with.

On that note it is with great pleasure that I again welcome you all to CANTO 2018 and to the Hard Rock Hotel, Panama.

So, on behalf of the Secretariat Team and myself, have a fantastic CANTO.