

Chairman's Speech for CANTO opening ceremony

Salutations....

Welcome

Good evening and welcome to CANTO 2015. Let me take this opportunity to wish you all a successful CANTO conference and exhibition.

CANTO is the biggest Telecoms ICT event in the Caribbean (nearly 500 delegates). Therefore it's a great honour and a privilege to chair this prestigious event. This is my first conference and exhibition as Chairman and I must say I am looking forward to meeting many of you over the next few days.

CANTO was founded in 1985 with just 8 national operators. At present, we have over 35 operators and over 90 affiliate members. Today we are honoured to have at this conference Mr. Neil Mackay, the founding Chairman of CANTO who started the Organization over 30 years ago. Neil Mackay could you please stand (Ladies and Gentlemen please show your appreciation). Mr. Mackay, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your leadership as the first Chairman of CANTO; we are honoured to have you here at the 31st Annual conference and exhibition. We appreciate you and the original operators for having the foresight and the vision to create the CANTO organisation.

Vision and Mission

As we speak of vision - the Board has approved a new vision and mission.

Our Vision: to become the leading authority in shaping information, communication and technology in the Caribbean and the Americas.

Our Mission: influence the innovation and development of ICT solutions for the benefit of members by developing, navigating and leveraging relationships with all stakeholders.

Advocate for policies, legislation and rules which advance the creation of an environment which facilitates the deployment of services and technologies across the region.

You can see from our vision that we intend to expand our horizons to the Americas in fact, recently we welcomed Antel from Uruguay as a new member of CANTO.

Our mission - we want to move from being merely a facilitator in the development of ICT solutions in the Caribbean to an organization which influences the innovation and development of ICT solutions and also advocates policies for creating the right environment for deployment of our services.

OTT

For most telecom operators the next few years will be challenging as our voice revenues continue to be affected by OTT players. Not only are network operators facing the cycle of continuously upgrading their networks but they will have the additional onslaught of OTT players using our networks 'free of charge' while offering voice services to our consumers. Of course, OTT is a subject that will be debated at our conference since it is a major challenge for every single network operator in the region.

WRC 15

Another important issue is spectrum for mobile operators. CANTO has written several times to Ministers on the availability of new spectrum for mobile operators. We must secure additional spectrum for advanced mobile and broadband services. This is to facilitate the progress of 5G services and the "Internet of Things" in the Caribbean. It is important therefore that Caribbean countries vote in favour of proposals that increase the mobile spectrum available at the next CITEL meeting in Ottawa, Canada 17-21 August. The World Radio Conference session on Monday afternoon promises to be a really interesting and important session.

Changes at CANTO – New Board (Female members)

Ladies and gentlemen

We are going through a transformation process at CANTO. You will see a number of changes going forward. I am pleased to announce that we had a successful and productive Board meeting on Saturday. Yes – we had our Board meeting on Saturdays so we the Board directors can spend more time with the delegates during the conference. I've been involved in CANTO since 1995 – over 20 years ago. During that time I can always remember that the CANTO Board was dominated by men and also by the so called 'old boys' network'. I am very happy to report that at Saturday's board meeting we had more female Board members in attendance than men. I believe this is the first time we have had more women than men on the Board. Would the following Board members please stand when I call your name? We have Helma Etnel our Treasurer from Telem; Opel Neil from Columbus communications; Melesia Sutherland from Cable and Wireless (replacing Davidson Charles); Rochelle Cameron from Cable and Wireless (replacing Tim Heffernan) and Gail Moss-Solomon from Digicel (replacing E Jay Saunders). This is a really an important development and ties in nicely with one of our sessions later this week 'Women in ICT'. Let's show our appreciation for the Women who are leading this organisation. Ladies and Gentlemen – CANTO has demonstrated at the highest level that we support 'women in ICT'.

However I do not want to forget my male Board members – please stand when I call your name. My Vice Chairmen Leon Williams from BTC; Charles Carter from TSTT; Lyrio Gomez from UTS and Ex-officio member and former Chair Dirk Curry from Telesur.

I would like to thank our former Board Director E Jay Saunders (please stand) for his support his exciting ideas and for making Hackathon event become a reality. Thanks E Jay.

Member's participation/Working committees

One of my personal goals is to encourage more participation from our non-regional operators in this organisation. Traditionally we always have good participation from Digicel and Cable & Wireless. Recently the Board approved

Joseph Samuel from the Antigua Public Utilities Authority APUA representing Antigua and Barbuda (my home town) as Chairman of the Marketing Communications Working Committee. Joseph please stand (let's show our appreciation). We also appointed Gervon Abraham from TSTT, Trinidad and Tobago (my adopted home) as Vice Chair of the Corporate Social Responsibility working committee. Gervon please stand (Let's show our appreciation). I have tremendous faith in these young individuals who have volunteered their time to serve this great organisation.

Also, with the aim of improving participation and feedback, and to allow our affiliate members more of a voice in the organisation – the Board approved a new working committee – the Vendors/Suppliers committee. We approved Benny Grogan from Walton Press as acting Chairman. Benny is affectionately known as 'Uncle Benny'. Uncle Benny please stand (Let's show our appreciation). I wish you every success with the new working committee.

CANTO App

CANTO must strive to be on the cutting edge of the new technology. This year, I am pleased to announce a new and exciting feature which will enhance your CANTO experience: now that you have registered you will receive the 'CANTO App'. It provides the latest CANTO agenda on your smartphone; allows you to see all the attendees, exhibitors and sponsors. There are maps of the conference area, meeting rooms and exhibition hall and you can access information on our social events and much more.

Hackathon

Another exciting event that I must mention is the launch of the **i-Create Annual CODE 1.0 (Caribbean Organized Developers and Entrepreneurs)** under the theme: "**Crack it, Hack it, Code it**". This is CANTO's first regional software design and developer competition and it's being held in conjunction with Domus Semo Sancus headed by E Jay Saunders and PIEDATA who we successfully worked with at our last AGM in Suriname.

So what is this all about? The event is a 48 hour coding contest which will be held from the 27th - 29th July. The competition seeks to bring together some of the best teams of software developers and designers from the Caribbean region, with the aim of solving challenging but real world problems. Teams will be given the opportunity to develop solutions to problems that will be communicated at the start of the competition.

This competition will also engage Caribbean youths in stimulating tech start-ups enabling them to gain exposure and expert advice on business development. The event promises to provide a fun, exciting and interactive experience that will not only captivate the minds of our Caribbean youth but also provide excellent networking opportunities. There are over US \$7,500 in prizes and free giveaways to be won!

I should note that at our AGM last year we had a very successful youth forum so we are certainly looking forward to this new competition.

Secretary General

Ladies and Gentlemen our Secretary General, Regenie Fraser, will be leaving us after 11 years of service. Regenie has always brought a certain grace to the CANTO proceedings. We have been able to rely on her and part of her charm is her very courteous and respectful manner.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you Regenie for your years of service and wish you all the very best in your future endeavours.

Conclusion

In conclusion, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I say 'thank you' to all of our sponsors and exhibitors and special thanks to the CANTO Secretariat staff for all the planning and organisation of this event - certainly without your support - this conference would not be possible.

I wish you all a productive and enjoyable CANTO 2015.

Thank you