



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CANTO Welcomes Deeper Consultation on Regional Roaming Rates

Port of Spain, 24th February 2020 - CANTO is a trade association which represents 25 CARICOM-based telecoms operators and 20 non-CARICOM-based operators who also operate in the Caribbean. CANTO recognizes that the issue of lower roaming rates is key to achieving regional aspirations of a Single ICT Space and takes seriously, the crucial role played by the telecoms industry in the development of our people and region. CANTO's membership looks forward to a constructive partnership with CARICOM to reform roaming rates and wishes to assure Heads of Government of our members' collective commitment to work collaboratively to achieve this shared objective.

Since 2016, CANTO has been working with the Caribbean Telecommunication Union ("CTU") and the ICT agency created by the Heads of CARICOM, on three (3) policy issues which will impact the creation of a Single ICT Space. These policy issues are:

1. Reduction of roaming rates;
2. Regulatory harmonisation between Over-the -Top (OTT) providers and traditional providers with respect to the equal payment of taxes and regulatory fees to government, as well as contributions to the development of sustainable infrastructure; and
3. Increasing broadband access.

While CANTO will continue to participate in the CTU process, it also looks forward to deeper consultation on the requirements for successful realization of the Single ICT Space. In the context of such collaboration, CANTO notes several key areas of concern for members. One issue is the inherent difficulty involved in setting a modest, fixed single roaming rate, given the significant differences in underlying costs of operation between CARICOM countries, and the attendant disparities in pricing of services which obtain as a result. Also of concern, is how to treat with single-state operators, such as CANTO members in Suriname, Belize, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago, given their inability to charge customers a fixed single rate in other CARICOM countries where they do not have networks. CANTO members are also concerned about the potential for fraud and arbitrage on their networks, and about the continued lack of equity in the treatment of telecoms operators as compared to Over-the-Top players in regional markets.

Notwithstanding these challenges, CANTO is confident that these and other issues can be addressed through careful and deliberate collaboration with CARICOM, and looks forward to partnering with Heads of Government to take the collective decisions necessary to make reform of roaming rates, a reality.

About CANTO

CANTO is the trade association of telecommunications operators in the Caribbean region. CANTO is a non-profit association made up of operators, organizations, companies and individuals in the ICT (telecommunications) sector. The Association has a Caribbean focus as it relates to ICT issues for the region with a global perspective. The Annual Conference and Trade Show offers the only stage on which global ICT issues are discussed by business, government and civil society. Learn more at <https://www.canto.org/> and twankin@canto.org