



Remarks by  
**Shola TAYLOR, Secretary-General Elect**  
**Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation**

on 26 July 2015 at the

Opening Ceremony of CANTO 2015 Conference & Trade Exhibition  
(31st Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition)  
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Miami, Florida

*Theme: Improving lives through broadband innovation*

### **Protocols**

The Rt Hon Perry Gladstone Christie, Prime Minister of The Commonwealth of the Bahamas,  
Hon Ministers of ICT for the Caribbean,  
Board of Directors of CANTO  
Ms Regenie Fraser, Secretary General of CANTO  
Senior Government Officials  
Protocols having been established

### **Appreciation for Invitation**

Let me at the outset express my profound appreciation to the Board and Secretariat of CANTO and in particular Regenie Fraser, for inviting me to speak at the opening ceremony of this very prestigious Conference.

I was a guest at your 30th Annual Conference last year in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and given its huge success, I promised myself to participate at this year's edition. I cannot easily forget one of the highlights of the Conference last year - the very illuminating speech of H.E. The Rt Hon Perry Gladstone Christie, the Prime Minister of the Bahamas, and my relaxed interaction with His Excellency on a number of ICT related issues. I thank you once again Mr Prime Minister.

When I was here last year, little did I know that I would be coming here in a new capacity as the Secretary-General Elect of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), taking over on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at the London headquarters of the organisation from Professor Tim Unwin's successful tenure in that role.

I am both excited and honoured at being appointed as the Secretary-General of the CTO, a community of diverse membership, and one that has accrued tremendous strengths over a hundred years. Given the impact of ICTs in our lives and the enormous opportunities for the socio-economic development of nations, I accepted this challenge to make a positive contribution towards improved access to ICTs for all. In this respect, I must thank all the



ICT Ministers in the Caribbean region for the confidence reposed in me in endorsing my candidature for this position.

## Consultation with Stakeholders

Your Excellencies,

As you are well aware, there are many challenges in this dynamic industry - lack of universal broadband access, gender imbalance (and I salute the newly appointed female members to the CANTO Board), ICT affordability, cybersecurity including child online protection, privacy protection and emergency communications, just to mention a few.

Since my appointment on 16 June 2015, I have embarked on an extensive but informal consultation with the ICT Stakeholder family within the Commonwealth. My participation at this event therefore affords me a unique opportunity to interact with the principal stakeholders in the Caribbean region to review some of the current programmes of the CTO such as Broadband, Cybersecurity and Cybercrime, the Programme for Development and Training (PDT) as well as other policy and regulatory initiatives. I am optimistic that through you, I will have the necessary inputs to drive my agenda for ICT development for this region within the scope of a new strategic plan for the CTO. I am pleased to see that CANTO is already addressing many of these issues and I look forward to a real engagement with you for the overall benefit of this region.

The theme you have chosen for this Conference **Improving lives through broadband innovation** is timely and is of particular interest not only to the Caribbean, but the Commonwealth. ICTs and in particular, broadband is an enabler of socio-economic development and has major impact on most sectors of the economy: education, health, agriculture, governance, transportation, energy and most forms of social interaction.

Broadband is becoming more of significance because despite the enormous progress made during the past years, and the variety of broadband technologies available, the challenge of affordable and universal access to broadband is still staring us in the face. The Internet of Things is predicted to connect over 50 billion devices by 2020 generating huge amounts of data that will be transmitted, using both advanced terrestrial and satellite technologies. I am pleased to note that broadband is a priority for CANTO. It is therefore appropriate that your Conference focuses on this issue and in this respect, I applaud the organisers for creating this platform of open dialogue.

Let me assure you that the CTO, with its long history in providing capacity building in the ICT sector, will play a significant role and collaborate with CANTO, the CTU, CARICOM as well as other regional organisations in the Caribbean.

The story of CANTO is a compelling one. With just 8 members/operators as founders starting the organisation in 1984, you have grown 30 years later to an association comprising of over 129 members in 34 countries. This is an excellent progress for which you all deserve commendation. The fact that this Conference attracts so many participants



is a testimony of the high profile of this event and it has simply become the **must attend** ICT event in the Caribbean region.

Before I conclude, let me take this opportunity to intimate your Excellencies with an important initiative that I am keen to take forward shortly after the commencement of my term of office on 17 September 2015.

As you are all aware, the Commonwealth presents a unique subset of the world's countries, including both rich and poor countries, large and small. Significantly, unlike regional organisations, our membership includes countries from every continent of the world. Gaining consensus on key issues relating to ICTs and telecommunications among Commonwealth countries can therefore play a critically important role in fostering wider international agreement.

As you are also aware, the next World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-15) is taking place from 2 to 27 November 2015, in Geneva Switzerland, and different regions are at the moment going through the final phases of their WRC preparations.

The CTO will therefore be convening a Commonwealth WRC-15 Preparatory Meeting in London, UK from 7 to 9 October 2015. This will provide a platform not only to examine the different regional stances on key issues, but will also be an opportunity to reach consensus on agenda items on which a Commonwealth consensus might help to resolve more swiftly at WRC-15.

I take this opportunity to invite all of you to this important event to ensure that the interests of the Caribbean are taken into account. Spectrum is key to broadband development and there are three reasons why your presence would be of utmost importance – they are broadband, broadband and broadband.

Finally, let me congratulate Ms Regenie Fraser for her 11-year successful tenure as Secretary-General of CANTO and wish her best wishes in her future endeavours. I would also like to thank your Excellencies for the leadership role you have played in this sector and once again, I pledge my commitment to the improvement of ICT in the Caribbean region.

I wish you great success at this meeting.

Thank you.

**Shola TAYLOR**