

# THE CARICOM REGIONAL ICT POLICY



# CARICOM ICT Sector Index

- GDP 3 bands (High, medium, low)
- Telecom Liberalisation:
  - Demonopolisation within/outside WTO
- Ringed by major fibre optic systems
- Sector applications include:
  - Education, health, energy, tourism, transnational business incl. E-Commerce, manufacturing, agriculture, E-government, culture, public information etc.)

# CARICOM ICT OBJECTIVE

- To provide the most favorable environment, on the most favorable terms,
  - for private investment,
  - Human Resource Development
  - creation of jobs,
  - enhanced productivity,
  - extensive and modernised public services, better quality of life and
  - for participating in the global information society
- To create wealth, raise the quality of life and to enhance international competitiveness.

# CARICOM

## Heads of Government ICT commitment

- Recognising that :
  - ICTs play a key role as enablers of sustainable human development and poverty reduction
  - Discourse on ICT has shifted from mainly technological issues to the human and development dimensions
  - ICTs should not be viewed only in terms of their economic potential but as an enabling platform for building an equitable global information society.

# CARICOM

## Heads of Government ICT commitment 2003 (Implementation & Resources)

- Georgetown Declaration (universal service, application, content)
  - Growing CSME (Chapter III)
    - Removal of restrictions
    - Increasing competitiveness
    - Supporting micro-business
    - Encouraging new business applications incl. E-Commerce

### Charter of Civil Society

- Social gender transformation/cohesion/integration
- Poverty reduction/wealth creation
- Preservation & promotion of culture
- Minimising “**digital divide**” & building capacity
- HRD & secure infrastructure

# Heads of Government Commitment 2003 (cont'd.)

- Development of the Services industry
- Legal & Regulatory Frameworks
- Development of ICT statistics & performance indicators
- International imperatives & cooperation (e.g. WTO, FTAA, EU, CITELE, UN, ITU, WIPO, ICANN)
- Strategy of inclusion (Community Partners & Institutions)
- **Issues of Connectivity**

# **Heads of Government Commitment 2003 (cont'd.)**

- **Prime Ministerial responsibility:**
  - **Grenada – Science and Technology**
  - **Antigua & Barbuda – Services (incl. Telecommunications)**

# Heads of Government Commitment 2003 (cont'd.)

## ■ **CARICOM Secretariat**

- Provision of support to national, sub regional and regional ICT efforts to strengthen connectivity and minimize digital divide
- Work with relevant indigenous institutions and agencies that are engaged in the various strands of ICT Policy development in the Region to ensure viable positions in the area and the roll out of implementation
- Participate in regional and international activities on behalf of the Caribbean Community
- Prepare submissions and report on major ICT developments impacting on the Community to the Heads and the appropriate organs of CARICOM.
- Work with other countries, regional and international institutions and agencies for effective implementation of the regional policy on ICT.

# International Initiatives

- UN/ ITU- World Summit on the Information Society (2003 & 2005)
- UN – MDGs (2015)
- World Trade Organisation (WTO) 2005
  - Services
- Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) 2005
- **Internet Corporation For Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)**
- World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) (2006)
- UNESCO
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- Millennium Development Goals

# CARICOM - VISION ICT

- **Agenda 2003** recognised:
  - Need for a strategy that ensures a comprehensive ICT/Connectivity regime based on:
    - ✓ Design & implementation (regional institutions)
    - ✓ Promotion of use and access
  - Strategic Application of ICTs is essential for development in the Caribbean Community
  - **2-year Plan Schedule** – impacted by critical imperatives including:
    - ✓ **CSME completion (2005)**

# ICT Agenda 2003: Platform for Action -

- **ROADMAP FOR REGIONAL ACTION**
  - **Assessment & Planning**
  - **Execution including:**
    - **Infrastructure**
    - **Utilisation**
    - **Content**
    - **Legal & regulatory frameworks**
    - **Financing/investment**
    - **Evaluation including :**
    - **Performance indicators**
    - **Role of the CARICOM Agencies and CARICOM Secretariat**

# PRIORITY AREAS FOR CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT

- **Strategic competitiveness of the region using ICT**
- **Technology diffusion challenge - Investment and human capacity**
- **External Trade for Services and Manufacturing, ICT efficiency**
- **Domestic Systems - Regulation and policy, production - entrepreneurship, business applications**
- **Capacity building**

# Key areas for regional effort

- **Affordable Access**
- **Policy Development**
  - Telecoms
  - ICT
    - Internet Management / Governance
  - Human Resource Development
    - Human Resource Audit
    - Training Plans
      - Curriculum development and/or redesign
      - Change Management
  - Trade (incl. issues relating to investments)
  - Content Management
- Frameworks
  - Legal and regulatory framework
    - IPRs (content issues)
    - Dispute resolution
  - Investment & Statistical Framework
- Collaborative (strategic) partnerships

# National Approaches in CARICOM

- Formulation of ICT policies
- Legal & regulatory reform
- E-Readiness assessments
- Progressive liberalisation of telecommunication

# Platform (Plan) of Action

Progress to date



# **Regional Plan of Action**

**E - Learning**

**E-  
Government  
and E-  
Governance**

**E-Commerce**

**ICT for  
Development  
Agenda**

**Public  
Education  
Programme**

**Roles and  
responsibilities  
for CARICOM  
Institutions**

**Strengthening  
capacity of the  
CARICOM  
Secretariat**

# E-commerce

- Draft Report from the Working Group on Services (2003)
- Community Guidelines for E-commerce (UWI/CIS)
- Report on "***Community policy, rules and disciplines to facilitate market integration by way of electronic commerce***" (UWI/CIS)

# E- Government

- ***CARICAD/UNDESA***
- ***Ministerial Consultations on ICT and E-Government***
- ***Website: E-government in the Caribbean ([www.unpan.org](http://www.unpan.org))***
- ***E-government readiness methodology***
- ***E-government readiness index /ranking of Caribbean countries***
- ***Caribbean Regional E- Government Strategy and Action Plan***

# E-Learning

- Caribbean Learning and Knowledge Network (CKLN) project:
  - Institutional Strengthening/Strategic Planning for Tertiary Education Institutions in the Caribbean
    - Labour Market Survey
  - Learning Management system for the Development of Distance Education programs
  - Telecommunications Equipment to effect Connectivity to E-Links
  
- Joint Program Development between Universities in Italy and UWI, UG, Utech and other Tertiary Institutions in the Caribbean

# Roles/responsibilities for CARICOM institutions

- Identification of roles/responsibilities for CARICOM institutions –
  - Work completed by Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee (May 2003)
    - CARICAD – E-Government
    - CTU – Telecoms, Internet Governance
    - CKLN – E-Learning
  - Accepted by Heads (July 2003)
  - 'Mobilised' by CARICOM Ministers of ICT (October 2004)

# CARICOM Secretariat

- To co-ordinate and lead efforts that are operationalised by organisations, and individuals within the Community.
- To enhance its reputation as being an open, transparent, and authoritative source of up to date information and expertise on ICT4Dev matters pertaining to the Caribbean.
- To implement activities and programmes formulated under the WSIS Plan of Action and projects submitted to funding agencies.
- To mobilise resources for implementation of projects and programmes.
- To establish the CARICOM ICT Steering Committee

# ICT for Development Agenda

- Capture the imagination, hearts and minds of Caribbean people
- Serve as a platform for promote awareness and achieve concrete benefits
- Multi-stakeholder approach in the execution of these flagship projects

# ICT for Development Agenda

- Endorsed by Ministers of ICT (October 2004)
- Six (6) Flagship programmes:
  - ICC Cricket World Cup 2007
  - ICT and Disaster Management
  - ICT and CSME Trade Facilitation
  - (ICT enabled) Cultural Entrepreneurship skills development
  - Participatory e-governance
  - Wireless access connectivity

# Other initiatives

- Video Conferencing between Member States (*UNDP*)
- Radio CARICOM
- Connectivity – Social Bandwidth (E-Links America) – *Caribbean Knowledge & Learning Network*

# Principles

- Part of a human and social development regional strategic plan
- Awareness-raising, public education, data collection and documentation
- Radically improved institutional arrangements
- Attitudinal shift on the part of staff members of official organisations (policy makers, regulatory bodies, government ministries)
- Fast-track execution of projects
- Improved engagement with global ICT community
- Regular consultation with Caribbean stakeholders

# Challenges / Constraints

## Funding

- Gov'ts and Private Sector better informed
- Banking industry re-vamped
- Int'l and Funding agencies need to re-align opportunities with development initiatives
- Relevant 'advisors' fully 'armed' with pertinent, timely information

# Challenges / Constraints

- ICT optimists vs. ICT pessimists
- Infrastructure – electricity, telephony, network connectivity
- Insufficient Measurement
- Policy constraints
- Costs
  - Example – the means to participate in global fora
- Capacity development
- Social exclusion
- Diminishing of cultural diversity
- Widening digital 'divide'
- Becoming producers – moving from being mere users
- Integrating ICT into the broader development strategies recognising that ICTs are not a panacea for development nor a replacement for real world processes

# Opportunities / Benefits

- Trade & investment increased
- Increased Competition
- Better negotiation as a Region
- Industry transformation
- **Technological leapfrogging**
- Access to basic services
- Young (trainable) workforce
- Multi-lingual region
- Proximity to North/South American Markets
- Improved governance and public service
- Support for SMEs
- Ability for businesses to leverage ICTs as tools
- Access to (improved) financial services
- Increased information flow
- Reduction of poverty

# Snapshot of the (CARICOM) future

- Creation a single, regional economic space and market –CSME
- Significant ICT investments
- ICTs integrated into the development Agenda
- Efficient Governments with Online Services
- Enhancement of the region's competitiveness & its participation in global economic activities
- Critical mass of highly skilled/trained citizens
- Knowledge-based economy focused on extending Internet Connectivity to all CARICOM people

# Snapshot of the (CARICOM) future

- Upgrade of infrastructure
- Access to secure networks and info. Systems.
- Access to affordable, reliable telecoms services
- **"No Citizen Left Behind"**



**Thank You...**  
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