



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**Willemstad, 1 February 2017**

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**"ICT connectivity catalyst for economic growth"**

CEO BT&P Franklin Sluis during 33rd CANTO Annual Meeting & Expo

From the 29th till 31st January, 2017, CANTO held its Annual General Meeting. This three day meeting, co-hosted by UTS and Bureau Telecommunicatie en Post (BT&P), was held at the Renaissance Hotel & Casino in Curaçao and carried the theme: "Re-imagining ICT as a Tool for National Growth and Development". During the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the meeting both BT&P and UTS, each from their own perspective, emphasized the importance of ICT for the economic development of Curaçao.

Re-imagining ICT is high on CANTO's agenda. This entails that the focus lies on achieving ICT connectivity beyond the modernization of societies as a catalyst for real economic change, both in the region as well as worldwide.

**BT&P presentation highlight**

Day two of the meeting took flight with the conference sessions delving into the CANTO theme. The session chaired by Ghatim Kabarra of UTS, focused on the present state of ICTs in the Caribbean and the future of ICT with an emphasis on Smart Cities and Smart Nations.

One of the highlights was from Franklin Sluis, CEO of Bureau Telecommunicatie en Post (BT&P), with his presentation titled: "Transforming Curaçao to a Smart Nation - The Road to Success. In his presentation, he conveyed his vision of ICT connectivity being a driver for changing the economic infrastructure, and therefore a catalyst for real economic growth.

Additionally his presentation underlined that part of the intended re-imagining process, as proposed by CANTO, inevitably includes the introduction of more efficient and effective policies to ensure that the ICT-infrastructure converges to the level that it would facilitate the creation of a Smart Nation. "At the core of such policies is the way we manage, and invest in our ICT-infrastructure to take advantage of its dynamism and possibilities in creating new opportunities for the telecommunication sector and for economic growth of our nation." as stated by Franklin Sluis.

He concluded his speech by addressing the fact that in order to build a Smart Nation we need to move away from infrastructure-based competition to a service based competition among carriers, and introduce a single infrastructure provider managed by an independent party, where all network participants have equal rights.

**Other valuable contributions**

During the meeting, various others provided a valuable contribution with their presentation, among which: Other dynamic speakers included: Eugene Rhuggenaath, Minister of Economic Development; Luis Adolfo Guillot, Huawei; Nico Scheper, AMS-IX Caribbean; Mark Luebke, 4Net Networking; Danilo Zabala, Blue NAP Americas - Data Center; Andrew



Solomon, Ictual IT Solutions; Maurits Kreijveld, Wisdom of the Crowd NL; and Jose Otero, 5G Americas.

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CANTO is recognized as the leading trade association of the ICT sector for shaping information and communication in the Caribbean. Founded in 1985 as a non-profit association of 8 telephone operating companies, CANTO has now grown to over 120 members in more than 34 countries. A Board of Directors appointed by the membership directs policy of the Association. This strategy is executed by the staff of a permanent Secretariat based in Trinidad and Tobago.

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***Note to Editors:***

For more information about this press release you can contact Jouraimien Martines of Bureau Telecommunicatie en Post on +(599-9) 463-1700.

On photo (attachment):

Franklin Sluis during his presentation at the 33<sup>rd</sup> edishon of the CANTO Annual General Meeting (CANTO 33rd AGM).