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REPORT

OF THE

FORTY-EIGHTH SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(COTED) –
INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES



CHAIRPERSON:

Dr. The Right Honourable Keith Mitchell
Prime Minister of Grenada
and
Lead Head with responsibility for ICT in
the CARICOM Quasi-Cabinet

VENUE AND DATE:

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INTRODUCTION

The **Forty-Eighth Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)** was convened on **17 January 2014** in Grenada in accordance with the mandate of the Thirty-Fourth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in July 2013.

The Meeting was chaired by **Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada and Lead Head of Government with responsibility for Information and Communication Technology.**

REPRESENTATION

A List of Delegates attending the Meeting is set out at **Annex I.**

OPENING

The Meeting opened with the singing of the national anthem of Grenada followed by a word of prayer by **Senator the Hon. Winston Garraway, Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for Information, Ministry for National Security, Public Administration, Disaster Management, Home Affairs, Information and Implementation, of Grenada**

H.E. Ambassador Irwin La Rocque, Secretary-General, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) offered brief opening remarks in which he acknowledged the instrumental role of the Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell on whose initiative the current critical Meeting was being held. It was the Prime Minister who had insisted to his colleagues at the July 2013 Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government that ICT should be an area of focus at their Inter-Sessional Meeting next month in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the other being Human Resource Development. **The Secretary-General** posited that ICT combined information, knowledge, processes and technology to provide a foundation for driving efficiencies and fuelling innovation. He suggested that it was no surprise, therefore, that in the course of consultations during the past year with stakeholders across the Region for the Community's Five-Year Strategic Plan, ICT emerged as one (1) of the major areas of focus identified to spur our growth and development.

ICT was playing an increasingly important role in the global economy. It had spawned a deeply connected and digitised society which had created a completely new economy - **the digital economy** - which spoke to economic value derived from the Internet and other ICTs. It was important therefore, not to fail to include it as an important part of our regional economy since it was an enabler of growth through increasing our efficiency and productivity. ICT must be viewed as the new frontier for regional integration. Despite the much-reported benefits of ICT, its development and adoption by developing countries, such as ours, had so far been limited.

That reality had already been recognised by the Community as evidenced by the design of a Regional Digital Development Strategy with an accompanying Action Plan for

implementation. The elements of that Strategy include - the development of a CARICOM Single ICT Space; Capacity-Building; Regional Policy Direction, Leadership and Governance; Innovation and Efficiency; all of which lead to a CARICOM Information and Knowledge Society. **The Secretary-General** made reference to the Caribbean Research and Education Network – C@ribNET which was launched in February 2013 and was operated and managed by the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network Agency (CKLNA). He opined that a successful digital economy hinged on the Region's ability to harness Research, Innovation and Education. He posited that C@ribNET, if utilised fully, could facilitate advancement in these areas and other sectors such as health. Mechanisms ought to be put in place to take advantage at the national level of the possibilities offered *via* C@ribNET.

In implementing the Regional Digital Development Strategy, there was a role for all the relevant regional institutions and the private sector. Some of these institutions such as the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), and the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) along with the regional universities are already engaged in initiatives which with proper co-ordination would greatly assist the achievement of the objectives of the strategy.

Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada addressed the Meeting. He welcomed delegates to the Meeting and Grenada. He stated that the Meeting was a precursor to the Inter-Sessional Meeting of Heads of Government to be held next month in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, where the topic "ICT" would receive focused attention on the agenda - along with Human Resource Development. These two (2) elements fused together could be the catalyst to enhance the Region's prospects for sustainable economic growth and development. If managed, exploited and maximised, they could bring the Region and its people to a place which afforded opportunities to develop new services, industries and markets that create jobs, return profits and drive growth.

The Prime Minister observed that it was heartening therefore, that twelve (12) Member States were so seized of the prospects that they were represented at the Meeting - the vast majority at the Ministerial level. It was also heartening to see so many of the technologically-focused groups and Institutions at the Meeting. **The Prime Minister** stated that all CARICOM Member States were at a crossroad with respect to the development of their economies, and providing a climate for the prosperity of their citizens. Member States were plagued by issues of high debt, high unemployment, healthcare problems, growing crime rates (some more than others), and overall low growth.

The Prime Minister made the point that the platform which the Region needed to embrace was that of Information and Communication Technology. He contended that the application of ICT provided the promise of enabling transformation in all areas of human endeavor with rewards that were compelling. It was necessary to find a way of leveraging the use of ICT, to change the current paradigm as a Region, and to optimise our development. ICT ought to be applied to the management of risk reduction as a consequence of climate change, which has ravaged our coastlines, eroded our mountains, cost much damage to our citizens - to their lives and property.

ICT must be applied in managing our citizens' health, through the dissemination of timely information to our people, wherever they live; thus helping us to take preventative measures, and to provide remote diagnostics, prescriptions and operations to our people. ICT must be applied to extend the scope and reach of affordable education to our citizens; as well as access to the development of relevant and appropriate skills and competencies. Of paramount importance, was the need to create an environment, enabled by ICT, in which the young people of the Region had opportunities for innovation; thus providing new products and services that were globally competitive.

The Prime Minister suggested that it was left for Member States to organise themselves at the national level, and put the human resources in place to take advantage and leverage the use of the network to provide maximum impact. The Region had no other option but to fully embrace the power of the current and emerging technologies; develop coherent strategies, and plan on using them, as well as, put the appropriate governance and processes in place at both the national and regional levels. If this were not done with haste, it would be at the peril of Member States that would continue to struggle to deliver on the simple promise of creating environments of prosperity for their citizens.

The full text of the statements by the Secretary-General and the Hon. Prime Minister are at **Annexes III and IV**.

Also featured during the opening of the Meeting was a cultural presentation and demonstration of C@ribNET (including a statement by Professor Nigel Harris, Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies (UWI), a PowerPoint presentation and other live videoconference interventions by presenters/participants from the Hugh Wynter Fertility Unit, University of West Indies, Mona, Jamaica and the United Kingdom (Mr. Jeremy Sharp, Head, Strategic Technologies at JANET, UK). An important highlight of the C@ribNET demonstration related to The UWI telemedicine services which the CKLN representative indicated that The UWI had attempted to deliver using the Internet but had failed. The UWI was currently collaborating with the CKLN in the delivery of this Telemedicine facility at the Hugh Wynter Fertility Management Unit. Set out at **Annex V** is a note of clarification from the UWI in response to the claim by the CKLN representative that The UWI had tried and failed to deliver telemedicine services using the Internet.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The **Agenda**, as adopted by the Meeting is set out at **Annex II**.

3. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

The Meeting set its hours of work and determined the manner in which it would conduct its business.

4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) FOR INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS:

4.1 ICT Enabling Regional Growth and Development

The Meeting received a PowerPoint presentation from the **Secretariat representative** on issues relating to the Regional Digital Development Strategy within the context of the regional and international environment and on the current status of ICTs in the Region including challenges and successes.

The presentation posited that the world was transitioning from an information and knowledge society to a digital and creative economy where major economic activity is derived from a highly educated, creative segment of population creating new goods and services from digital technologies.

The presentation also proposed some measures that could be taken to fast track implementation of the strategy and take advantage of opportunities for fulfilling the Region's ICT Agenda and contribute to its sustainable development.

Within the context of the regional and global environment, it was noted that the some of the challenges facing the Region were that the uptake of ICT innovations was relatively slow, there were more consumers than producers and the citizenry was not adequately prepared for the Knowledge-Based Society. However, some advances have been made such as the establishment of CKLN/C@ribNET, IXPs, CXC – Digital Media course and syllabus, increased mobile penetration and applications development.

The measures recommended for advancing the Digital Agenda should be primarily people-centred, focusing on the development of human capital for improving economic and social development. The measures related to –

- (i) The development of a **Regional Single Space** where there is one (1) integrated ICT market providing services across borders, stimulating competition and investment;
- (ii) The development of a **Digital Agenda for CARICOM (2015-2020)** that would build on the Regional Digital Development Strategy, promote use of technology, identify services to benefit all sectors, build a modern robust infrastructure and facilitate societal development. The implementation of the Digital Agenda was expected to increase industry digital transformation, create a digital entrepreneurial culture, attract, develop and retain digital entrepreneurial skills and talent, facilitate access to finance and enhance investments and boost a digitally powered Single Market;
- (iii) The development of a **SMART or Digital City** in every Member State that would be a city with the capability to use ICTs to embody smart utilities, mobility, economy, environment, education, people, living, health, planning and governance;

- (iv) Emphasis was placed on, for example -
 - (a) the role of the public sector and measures which could make it more effective including providing information and establishing e-government capabilities;
 - (b) Human Resource Development and Education;
 - (c) ICT role in development of new products and provision of financial solutions;
 - (d) Need for paying attention to matters of cyber security in the face of increasing levels of cybercrime;

- (v) Also highlighted were -
 - (a) The fragmented or non-existent digital markets;
 - (b) Lack of inoperability;
 - (c) Need for investment in networks and effectively address the broadband issues;
 - (d) Need to invest in research and innovation efforts;
 - (e) Importance of Resource Mobilisation.

The Meeting of Officials had made some recommendations to advance the ICT Agenda as follows -

- (i) Use of ICTs to support business facilitation and ease of doing business;
- (ii) **Fostering** the development of ICTs and encouraging innovation that could be applied to all sectors through, *inter alia*, a regional innovation policy, research and development, competition policy and entrepreneurship development especially among the youth. Innovation also needed to be accompanied by entrepreneurship which would transform product development and contribute to economic development. In this regard, it was noted that applications were often developed for a specific purpose usually when funded by donors, and were not further developed and marketed as a product that could be more broadly applied at the regional and international levels;
- (iii) **Investing** in ICT services where opportunities and niche markets were identified should be encouraged and information used as a value asset utilising opportunities that a regional single ICT space created. here was need to identify future opportunities for new growth areas especially in the initial stages of development in order to capitalise on high margins of return;

- (iv) **Financing** for the development and sustainability of the digital economy was required and therefore development partner funding should only supplement dedicated resources allocated by governments that could be funded through public-private sector partnerships. Countries and the Region could also seek to consolidate ICT budgets for greater effectiveness;
- (v) **Further prioritising** of ICT areas for development at the regional level should be based on the needs of the Community and demand for information. In this regard, Cyber Security, Climate Change and Disaster Management and implementation of the Regional Digital Development Strategy were suggested as areas for consideration;

It was noted that the Heads of Government had identified eighteen (18) regional priorities of which ICT was one (1) of the priorities. Also, the Commission on the Economy had been mandated by the Bureau of the Conference to give priority to, *inter alia*, fiscal sustainability, employment, energy and ICT and that the Regional Strategic Plan, the draft of which was currently being finalised was already taking these priorities on board;

- (vi) **Creating** an enabling environment to nurture the development of ICTs through the establishment of policies, implementation strategies and a legislative framework with a collaborative effort of government, private sector and other stakeholders was critical. Governments should take a lead role in demonstrating the successful use of ICTs in its e-government applications and interaction with the public and therefore serve as a catalyst for greater demand for and application of ICT. Particular attention was given to the OECS e-government project;
- (vii) **Developing** human resources by incorporating ICT in education policies and programmes, making ICT courses compulsory in all schools and tertiary institutions and reaching those persons outside of the formal education system in order to prepare the populace for living and succeeding in the digital economy. There was need to encourage and train youth to be entrepreneurial and focus on production of ICTs rather than being mere consumers particularly in specific areas of products, including software products (e.g. games and graphics);
- (viii) **Recognising** the critical role of the private sector and facilitating its involvement throughout including in people, public, private sector partnerships.

THE COTED:

Agreed to the need for sustained regional attention to ICT in the years 2014 and 2015 in the first instance;

Considered the opportunities for 'fast-tracking' ICTs and **also agreed** that increased usage of C@ribNET evidenced by increased NRENs and Communities of Interest be treated as a priority;

Also agreed that the Single ICT Space also be treated as a priority and that a committee be established under the coordination of the CARICOM Secretariat and comprising representation from public and private sectors and civil society across the Community to develop the road-map for the CARICOM Single ICT Space;

Mandated that –

- (i) A road-map addressing all areas as outlined in the RDDS be developed and presented for consideration by the **end of 2014**;
- (ii) The list of priority areas be shared with all Councils of the Community by the CARICOM Secretariat before the **end of the first quarter 2014**;
- (iii) initiatives and programmes identified be forwarded to the Heads of Government for their attention;

Recommended that Heads of Government mandate that all Councils of the Community consider ICT development initiatives at all meetings in 2014 and 2015 to ensure that sustained attention is paid to this critical sector.

4.2 A CARICOM Single ICT Space – Implementation of Key Elements

The Meeting considered **pages 4.2-1 to 4.2-9 of the Report of the Meeting of Officials** as well as a PowerPoint presentation by the **Secretariat representative** in respect of a **CARICOM Single ICT Space**.

The presenter reminded the Meeting that the Single ICT Space was a key recommendation contained in the Regional Digital Development Strategy (RDDS) and had been presented as a priority area to be focused on in 2014 and 2015 in specific areas. **The presenter** discussed, among other things -

- (i) The rationale for the Single ICT Space – encompassing the fostering of the digital environment for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the harmonisation of national markets, and making countries stronger as a collective for attracting new businesses;
- (ii) The benefits of the Single ICT Space including – the creation of efficiencies, the generation of new businesses, the stimulation of growth in the ICT sector and, the promotion of opportunities for research and innovation;
- (iii) The Elements of the Single ICT Space – consumers, telecommunications, media and content, labour, information, financial services, and a regulatory environment;
- (iv) Areas of Focus in 2014-2015 – the development of a road-map, information management, telecoms, media and content, and labour. **The presenter** highlighted

some high-level activities that could be pursued in respect of each of the forgoing as follows -

- (a) **With respect to the road-map** – the development and management of the Region's ICT market, in particular the realignment of the wireless spectrum; laws and regulation; lobbying for treatment as a Region in order to gain cost advantage; labour issues;
- (b) **As regards information management** – growth in the use of the Internet; decline in traditional media; making some data public and free; storage of information assets in clouds as against maintaining costly servers; research and innovation; statistics and indicators; and cybercrime and cyber security;
- (c) **With respect to telecommunications** – the reduction of roaming rates; the establishment of one (1) area code for the Region; top level domain (dot caricom); harmonised numbering for social services; spectrum management; a single regulator; broadband connectivity; private-public partnerships; Diaspora re-engagement;
- (d) **As regards and media and content** – intellectual property issues; developing and building on existing CARICOM digital libraries; developing content repositories;
- (e) **With regard to labour** – the development of a database of IT professionals available to the Region; and re-skilling and creating new professionals out of the Information sector.

In the ensuing discussion issues related to –

- (i) the sharing and harmonisation of spectrum space, and the fact that the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) was doing much work in this area under phase two (2) of that organisation's Caribbean Spectrum Planning and Management Policy Reform Project;
- (ii) the Meeting was updated that the Officials had sounded a note of caution in respect of the proposal for one (1) area code (e.g. 809) for the Region. It was suggested that there were technical reasons – related to the numbering plan and manner in which numbers were allocated and why the countries of the Region ought to have their own country/area codes and in the process have access to larger pool of numbers; and number portability and switch problems created by increases in numbers;
- (iii) A suggestion that where funding was limited –
 - (a) consideration ought to be given to using pilot projects to get initiatives underway and not wait for funding which might not materialise;

- (c) it was necessary, beyond the financial resources, to determine the human and institutional resources that were required. There was also recognition of the fact many of the international donors were moving away from providing support to countries at the national level to providing regional level financial support;
- (d) it was posited that there was need to identify sources of funding for the Single ICT Space and advise the Heads of Government accordingly, in order to secure their 'buy-in'. It was also necessary for countries to consider using their own funding to support this initiative;
- (iv) Spectrum management, broad band access and cyber security as areas in which the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) was interested in collaborating with the Region;
- (v) It was affirmed that the Single ICT Space was integral to the CSME and not separate from it;
- (vi) Countries were encouraged to ensure that they had a strategy and clear sense of what they required and the direction in which they wished to go in the future so as not to be easily distracted or taken off course by the agenda of agencies or institutions which may seek to provide assistance to them;
- (vii) Reference was made to legislation as well as timelines and the extent to which they were achievable;
- (viii) There was recognition of the strong need for a mechanism to be put in place to address the abolition of charges for both voice and data roaming in the Region.

THE COTED:

Acknowledged that the Single ICT space could be an enabler for the CSME and CARICOM Digital Economy and can play an integral role in transforming the Region through innovation and competitiveness;

Agreed that the focus of work would be on the (specific) areas of Information, Telecommunication, Media and Cyber-security as a priority for the years 2014 and 2015;

Strongly supported increasing the availability of public sector information for re-use both by individuals and businesses and to foster innovation and the development of the knowledge-based economy;

With respect to Roaming Rates –

THE COTED:

Mandated the ICT Lead Agencies to –

- (i) **present** a work programme on Single ICT space activities for approval of the COTED - ICT;
- (ii) **examine** the Digital Dividend issues and opportunities and submit a progress report to the next Special Meeting of the COTED - ICT;

Emphasised that the human resources with digital literacy and skills (e-Skills) were critical for strengthening an ICT-enabled inclusive society;

With respect to Cybersecurity –

THE COTED:

Also agreed to start the digitisation and dissemination of Regional information in 2015 and thereby increase the opportunities for digital service innovations, including digital library projects.

4.3 Key Role of CKLN/C@ribNET

The **CKLN representative** informed the Meeting that the Caribbean Regional Research and Education Network (C@ribNET) was launched in February 2013 and allowed the connection of secondary schools, teachers training colleges, community colleges and institutions of learning.

This was supported by the development of National Research and Education Networks or (NRENs) that provided similar linkages at the national level to facilitate knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. This fostered the transformation of how people and institutions work; facilitate collaboration and cooperation in areas such as Education, Health, Crime and Security, Disaster Management and Culture.

The work of the CKLN through the operation of C@ribNET contributed to the implementation of the RDDS in building capacity in the Region by –

- (i) **Accelerating** development in Science, Technology, Engineering and fuel Innovation;
- (ii) **Facilitating** cost sharing amongst institutions and countries in leveraging ICT for economic development;
- (iii) **Creating** National, Regional and Global ubiquitous access (High bandwidth);

- (iv) **Sharing** resources including cost;
- (v) **Building** Communities around themes of common interest;
- (vi) **Enabling** innovation;
- (vii) **Increasing** students opportunities;
- (viii) **Improving** education and research;
- (ix) **Enhancing** institutional collaboration;
- (x) **Improving** functional cooperation;
- (xi) **Enhanced** cultural expression.

The specific achievements of the Network were highlighted as follows -

- (i) **Provided** the e-infrastructure and broadband connectivity for the Regional Research and Education Network C@ribNET connecting sixteen (16) CARICOM countries together;
- (ii) **Provided** the e-infrastructure and connectivity and begun the establishment of National Research and Education Network (NREN) in sixteen (16) CARICOM Member States and connected these networks to the rest of the world;
- (iii) **Developed** a Regional Portal for the C@ribNET network to allow CARICOM institutions to work collaboratively and support Functional Cooperation between institutions and citizens across CARICOM Member States;
- (iv) **Provided** initial connectivity to thirty (30) educational institutions in sixteen (16) Member States to C@ribNET and the rest of the world;
- (v) **Established** Network Operations, Monitoring, Support and Maintenance capabilities to ensure continuity and security of C@ribNET and NRENS;
- (vi) **Begun** the development of Community of practice amongst Caribbean citizens and Institutions working on themes of common interest in support of Functional Cooperation and collaboration.

It was emphasised that C@ribNET was not only applicable for education purposes but could transform all sectors. In this regard, the Meeting was informed that the technology enabled the Caribbean Meteorological Organisation (CMO) and the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to access high powered computers for undertaking various assimilation exercises. The United States (US) had expressed interest in providing training in Security using C@ribNET. The CKLN was in the process of

formulating a project with the US State Department in order to provide harmonised training to police academies throughout the Region and allow information sharing. He also mentioned the Hugh Wynter Fertility Management Unit that utilised telemedicine to educate students across The UWI Open Campuses using C@ribNET facilities.

It was pointed out that in relation to financing and use of resources, the CKLN had exceeded expectation from a World Bank and European Union (EU) perspective particularly given that ninety-nine per cent (99%) of the 10.00 million Euro grant was expended. **With respect to sustainability of the Project**, it was noted that the EU Grant Agreement would end on **15 February 2014** and that based on negotiations with the European Commission (EC), support had been secured for a second contribution from the 11th EDF for Phase II of the Project.

The Meeting was informed that with respect to any concern regarding the limited broadband available for the Network that could possibly prohibit the implementation of programmes that required large amounts of broadband such as telemedicine, one (1) of the challenges facing the CKLN and the operations of the Network was the limited use of the Network which also impacted on its sustainability. Therefore, concern regarding the amount of bandwidth may be premature.

In the ensuing discussion, the Meeting also called for wider use of ICTs not only as an enabler but also to create jobs by providing ICT services across the Region and globally, develop human resource capacity, improving administrative systems with respect to ways of doing business and modernising economies.

In relation to sustainability of the Network, the Meeting was informed that bandwidth was leased from providers and that there was collaboration with the operators in order to facilitate the Network. The point of presence was an asset owned by the countries in which the hubs were installed. Technical capacity was developed by training of twenty (20) CARICOM Nationals from all the Member States in order to acquire the skills for maintaining the Network. Member States were therefore required to establish a legal entity to take responsibility for the Network and to provide one (1) technician to work along with the technical group at the CKLN in Grenada to maintain its NREN. The Meeting was also informed that monitoring of the Network was executed by a Mexican NREN to undertake any repairs to the system.

In the future, it was proposed that an IRU could be purchased to increase the capacity of the Network tenfold. It was important that the Network remained ubiquitous and available to all at an affordable price. Funding could be accessed for this purpose through the 11th EDF. It was critical that all Member States were engaged and therefore it was important to maintain a collaborative approach to ensure that no Member States was left behind given the varying levels of development.

In response, **the Secretary-General** informed the Meeting that a mechanism for coordination among regional institutions had been developed that used a cluster approach where one (1) of the Clusters was ICT which had responsibility for implementation of ICT programmes in the Region. This approach was intended to facilitate coordination at the technical level so as

to create greater efficiency and avoid duplication. However, he pointed that while this coordination existed at the technical level, there was some lack of responsiveness at the political level where the Secretariat has been experiencing difficulty in convening Meetings of the COTED due to a lack of quorum. It was evident by the fact that the last Meeting of the COTED on ICT matters was in 2011, three (3) years prior to the current meeting. He reiterated the importance of the work of the COTED in providing political guidance and oversight in order to achieve the ICT roadmap as a collective Community. He called for greater political commitment and attendance at meetings and proposed that senior officials meet more regularly by videoconference to ensure that there was harmonisation in implementation of programmes and to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.

THE COTED

Noted the work undertaken by the CKLN, the official launching of C@ribNET in **February 2013** and the development of NRENs that facilitated CARICOM institutions to work collaboratively and support functional cooperation between institutions and citizens across CARICOM Member States;

Also agreed to -

- (i) **Embrace** C@ribNET and the National Networks (NREN) as a core component of their national and regional ICT strategy;
- (ii) **Support** the development of appropriate national governance arrangements to manage these national networks and provide policies for use of the network;
- (iii) **Invest** in appropriate training for developing the technical human resources capacity at a national level to further develop the network and provide support;
- (iv) **Signal** to development partners that these networks were seen as strategic national and regional resources to aid regional economic development and they were strategic priorities;

Also noted that the EU Grant Agreement would end on **15 February 2014** and that based on negotiations with the EC, support had been secured for a second contribution from the 11th EDF for Phase II of the Project;

Further agreed to explicitly provide support for second tranche of grant funding from the EU (EDF 11) to strengthen the capacity of the network core and to extend connectivity to many more CARICOM institutions on the network;

Further noted the concerns expressed regarding the limited broadband available for the Network as well as the high costs offered by the current provider(s);

Agreed that Regulators be asked to examine how funds from the Universal Service Fund could be utilised towards the implementation of the Phase II and Phase III of C@ribNET towards ensuring sustainability of the Network;

Urged Member States who had not yet begun NRENs to commit to establishing these before the end of 2014;

Noted that the Original Agreement was not yet in force given that only four (4) Member States had signed and ratified the Original Agreement and only one (1) Member States had signed and ratified the Amendment to the Agreement;

Also urged Member States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the CKLN Agreement before the end of **May 2014**.

4.4. Caribbean Telecommunication Union

The **CTU representative** provided an overview of the CTU Work Programme that contributed towards the development of the CARICOM Single ICT Space consistent with its mission towards creating an environment in partnership with members to optimise returns from ICT resources for the benefit of stakeholders. In the execution of its work in collaboration with its partners, the CTU sought to create a common vision, exercise commitment to the regional Agenda and create harmonised policies.

It was posited that fostering the development of the single ICT Space required the following –

- (i) Coordinated approaches that result in meaningful advancement – Not scatter-shot);
- (ii) Capacity-building to formulate and implement plan and maintain systems;
- (iii) Innovation (e.g. tapping non-traditional resources and systems); and
- (iv) Support for Implementation,

In this regard, the CTU focused its work primarily on –

- (i) development of ICT Harmonised Policy Formulation including national policy development and implementation of development plans;
- (ii) coordination of Regional ICT projects including the development of cyber security and vulnerability testing;
- (iii) development of ICT Capacity including training, workshops and seminars;
- (iv) representation of the Caribbean with respect to ICT issues; and

- (v) provision of advice on ICT issues.

The specific activities and achievements highlighted contributed significantly toward the development and sustainability of the Single ICT Space and related to the establishment of –

- (i) Caribbean Internet Governance;
- (ii) Caribbean Spectrum Management Reform;
- (iii) The Caribbean Centre of Excellence;
- (iv) The Caribbean ICT Roadshow;
- (v) Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure;
- (vi) Cyber Security;
- (vii) Roaming ICT Data Collection.

In the ensuing discussion, the **Grenada representative** expressed interest in participating in the CASIM Programme. The **CTU representative** explained that this project was designed by the World Bank and presented to Member States and that negotiations with respect to participation was on a bilateral basis. The CTU was asked to coordinate the respective activities at the sub-regional level with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). ECTEL and CKLN were required to support certain projects identified by countries. And the CTU would meet regularly with these institutions to ensure delivery and impact on the beneficiaries.

THE COTED

Noted the work undertaken by the CTU particularly in its role in harmonising policy and development plans, coordinating projects, increasing ICT capacity through training and advising and representing the Region on ICT issues.

4.5 Implementation of Action Plan for the Regional Digital Development Strategy (RDDS)

The Meeting was informed that Ministers at their Meeting in May 2011 had requested a one-year plan for advancing some activities identified in the Strategy.

Understandably, there has been progress with regard to the specific objectives of the Action Plan as follows –

- (i) Developing the CARICOM Single ICT Space;
- (ii) Capacity-Building;

- (iii) Regional Policy Direction, Leadership and Governance;
- (iv) Innovation and Efficiency, Information Management, Local Content and Media;
- (v) Functional Cooperation;
- (vi) Measuring, Monitoring, Follow-up, Evaluation;
- (vii) Sustaining the Caribbean Information and Knowledge Society: Financing and Resourcing.

The Secretariat representative provided an overview of the presentations made by ICT Lead Agencies at the Meeting of Officials that provided an update of their work in the context of the strategic objectives – A synopsis of the presentations are set out below -

The University of the West Indies (UWI)

The University's contribution to the RDDS focused primarily on Capacity-Building for the CARICOM Digital economy. In this regard, **The UWI representative** informed the Meeting that The UWI approach to education was student-centred and there was concerted effort in creating synergies within the University and consolidating the various campuses into one (1) university through the use of ICTs that would enable students to access elements of their education wherever there were located.

This was being implemented through the Single Virtual University Space (SVUS) designed to use technology to integrate the collective strengths and resources of the four (4) UWI campuses, to achieve greater efficiencies and to enhance its service to the underserved communities in the Region. It was noted that through the Open Campus, The UWI already had a presence in the non-campus territories. However, with the SVUS, the role of the Open Campus expanded the delivery capacity of The UWI throughout the non-campus territories. Students will be able to register for courses from the residential campuses and to receive live lectures and seminars from any campus or any regional or international partner of The UWI thus providing high quality education with greater flexibility for students at lower cost.

In this regard, a number of pilots were launched through virtual teaching, providing real time interaction among students and teachers. In addition, use of technologies had enabled students to view various surgical procedures. These pilots were –

- (i) a tele-medicine project at the Hugh Wynter Fertility Management Unit at Mona;
- (ii) a MSc. Degree in Development Studies offered by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES);

- (iii) a post-graduate Diploma in Teaching offered by the School of Education at Mona and streamed live to teachers in Montserrat, Saint Lucia and Western Jamaica.

Other pilots were planned in the areas of Nursing and Pharmacology.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

The **ITU representative** informed the Meeting that the ITU played an integral role in facilitating specific areas of WSIS Action Lines that were compatible with the goals of the RDDS as follows –

- (i) **Information and Communication Infrastructure** - developing new technologies and standards to lower the cost of broadband backbone infrastructure, new software solutions, building cross-border networks, policies to ensure network openness and ubiquitous connectivity network operation, maintenance and management and mean-time repair;
- (ii) **Building Confidence and Security in use of ICTs** – developing cyber risk analysis and risk management, international frameworks, child online safety, people-centred projects, creating legal and regulatory frameworks;
- (iii) **Creating and Maintaining an Enabling Environment for ICTs** - increasing consumer awareness, promoting resource efficiency, fostering cooperation between ICT and environmental sectors in greening the ICT sector, adapting international guidelines related to consumer protection policies with respect to internet protocol (IP) based networks and cloud computing environment; developing smart regulation based on open consultations involving all stakeholders, building a regulatory framework that balances the interests of suppliers and users in areas such as the protection of intellectual property rights, data protection and digital rights management, while encouraging innovation.

The Meeting was informed that the ITU reflected the areas identified above including the establishment of National CIRTs, dispute settlement, enhancing competitiveness in the Caribbean through the harmonisation of ICT policies, legislation and regulatory procedures (HIPCAR II), review of national telecommunication policies, act and regulations; disaster management, child online protection and girls and women in ICTS, transition from analogue to digital broadcasting; spectrum management and broadband connectivity.

The **ITU representative** encouraged Member States to participate in the WSIS+10 High-Level Event which will, *inter alia*, address progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes related to the WSIS Action Lines under mandates of the participating agencies and provide a platform for multi-stakeholder coordination of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, with involvement and participation of all WSIS action line facilitators and other UN agencies.

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

The **OECS representatives** provided a report on the main ICT project undertaken within the OECS intended to promote the efficiency, quality and transparency of public services through the delivery of regionally integrated e-government applications that took advantage of economies of scale.

The major achievements of the project were highlighted as follows -

- (i) **Improved** Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) with the development of a web-based information system;
- (ii) **Ratification** of OECS Harmonised E-government Legislation at OECS Authority Meeting in January 2012 providing a legal and regulatory framework for electronic transactions to promote e-government and e-commerce services and investments;
- (iii) **Assessment** of national health environment with the objective to implement a Regional Health Management Information System;
- (iv) **Strengthened** the National Health Information System in two (2) countries with the provision of computer and networking equipment and open-source systems for Dominica (OpenMRS) and Grenada (Vista);
- (v) **Strengthening** of the E-Government Framework through the provision of management systems, hardware and software, training and capacity-building;
- (vi) **Implementation** of major e-government systems including, Electronic Procurement System for OECS, Front End Tax Electronic Filing System Electronic registration, declaration and filing and e-payment; Multi-Purpose Identification System.

The Meeting was also informed of the implementation of the 10th EDF – Export Development Unit Competitive Business Initiative which involved a number of ICT applications.

Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)

The **CARICAD representative** informed the Meeting that the focus of CARICAD was on building regional policy direction, leadership and governance and was in keeping with the third Strategic Objective of the RDDDS which was “*to manage and use ICT to enable **good governance** and increase **efficiency in operations** ...*”

The e-Government Strategy 2010-2014 was intended to contribute to the development of a CARICOM Public Service as a model of Good Governance and fulfil the goals of growth in GDP and employment, safe, knowledgeable and cohesive societies, regional integration and strengthening democracy.

CARICOM Youth Ambassadors (CYA)

The **CYA representative** delivered a PowerPoint presentation entitled “*Digital Youth and the use of Electronic and Multimedia Strategies for Youth Engagement*”. She stated that a person born in the digital age, who she referred to as the “Millennials” was thoroughly familiar and comfortable with computers and electronic devices since childhood. The Millennial generation was diverse, technologically savvy, open minded, confident, connected and open to change. Many spend most of their lives around the computers, video games, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age and often sought information and knowledge by going on-line rather than using a textbook. Importantly, they had little tolerance for delays and expected instant results.

In light of the characteristics of the today's youth, it was recommended that in order to engage them, there was need to change the methods of communication by utilising more accessible and youth friendly materials such as the Ipad/Kindle/mobile phone.

This was evident by the Social Media Interaction between the Youth and the CARICOM Secretary-General of CARICOM held on 1 November 2011 which received over nine thousand (9,000) viewers. It was important to reach the youth where they were by, *inter alia*, building an online community through policy support and advocacy, texting and interactive face to face presentation. In addition, activities, strategies, programmes and presentations should evoke the necessary excitement needed to keep the attention of the youth, for example, using less words and more pictures and less talk and more activities preferably on issues that affected them most. There was also need to acknowledge Youth as assets in the development, implementation and adaptation of a Regional ICT Strategy.

Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organisations (CANTO)

The **CANTO representative** informed the Meeting that CANTO comprised telecommunications companies or administrations which operate a public telecommunications network in a Caribbean territory for the express purpose of providing national and/or international telecommunication services.

CANTO acknowledged that strengthening relationships with the private sector is a big part of the CARICOM Secretariat work programme this year and advised that CANTO's mandate is also to partner with the public sector to fulfil the ICT needs of this Region collaboratively. CANTO shared its theme for this year “**Strategic Alliances for Sustainable Broadband Development**”.

There was a proposal that CANTO in partnership with the CARICOM Secretariat hold a private sector/public sector forum on ICT in 2014.

CANTO was desirous of forging closer links and partnerships with the public sector and in this regard, invited the CARICOM Secretariat to attend the 30th Annual General Meeting scheduled for **25-25 January 2014** at the Half Moon Hotel, Rose Hall, Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The **CANTO representative** presented a PowerPoint presentation entitled “**Incentivising Investment in Broadband in the Caribbean**”. The **CANTO representative** stated that at the CANTO Conference in July 2012, the Ministerial Panel had requested that the industry provide guidance on how Caribbean Governments could incentivise operators to accelerate investment in broadband networks. This request had been viewed as being timely having regard to, among other things, information from a Global Information Technology Report 2012’ (the Report) in which several CANTO member countries had been included and ranked out of a total of one hundred and forty-two (142) countries as follows -

COUNTRIES	NETWORK READINESS INDEX	SUBINDEXES			
		Environment	Readiness	Usage	Impact
Barbados	35	29	51	34	36
Trinidad and Tobago	60	76	43	52	91
Jamaica	74	62	62	79	82
Guyana	90	86	81	92	101
Belize	119	121	112	123	124
Suriname	121	131	114	114	131

In terms of reasons why countries received rankings that were not within the top thirty (30), the Global Information Technology Report 2012’ highlighted the fact that ‘... *Latin America and the Caribbean continues to suffer from an important lag in adopting ICT and technology more broadly. This is reflected in the rankings, as no country manages to reach the top thirty (30) ...three (3) shared reasons for this lag can be identified: these countries all exhibit an insufficient investment in developing their ICT infrastructure, a weak skill base in the population because of poor educational systems that hinder society’s capacity to make an effective use of these technologies, and unfavourable business conditions that do not support the spur of entrepreneurship and innovation. Addressing these weaknesses will be crucial for improving the Region’s competitiveness and shifting its economies toward more knowledge-based activities...*’

Another report entitled “*Impact of Broadband on the Economy*” published in April 2012 made reference to the fact that –

- (i) *‘an increase of 1 per cent in broadband adoption contributes to 0.008 per cent of GDP growth...*
- (ii) *the economic impact of broadband manifests itself through four types of effects ... The first effect results from the construction of broadband networks. In a way similar to any infrastructure project, the deployment of broadband networks creates jobs and acts over the economy by means of multipliers. The second effect results from the “spill-*

over” externalities, which impact both enterprises and consumers. The adoption of broadband within firms leads to a multifactor productivity gain, which in turn contributes to growth of GDP. On the other hand, residential adoption drives an increase in household real income as a function of a multiplier. Beyond these direct benefits, which contribute to GDP growth, residential users receive a benefit in terms of consumer surplus, defined as the difference between what they would be willing to pay for broadband service and its price. This last parameter, while not being captured in the GDP statistics, can be significant, insofar that it represents benefits in terms of enhanced access to information, entertainment and public services.’

The presenter highlighted two (2) main areas of focus – in terms of incentive both fiscal and regulatory - within the framework of the Caribbean Industry Proposal which in the view of the industry would create the enabling environment that governments should seek to establish to encourage the rollout of broadband networks throughout the Region.

These two (2) main areas were broken down as follows –

1. Desirable Characteristics of Broadband Incentives -

- (i) All broadband networks [should be] eligible;
- (ii) Time Bound;
- (iii) Geographically focused to the extent possible;
- (iv) Capable of supporting innovation and new services;
- (v) Targeted at initial capital costs in particular.

2. Specific Possible Incentives –

- (i) Import Duty Relief;
- (ii) Consumption Tax Relief and Tax Credits;
- (iii) Reduced Licence Fees or Licence Fee Waivers for a specific period;
- (iv) Use of Universal Service Funds;
- (v) Resourcing;
- (vi) More Government Services Online.

The following issues emerged from the discussions as follows -

- (i) Soliciting collaboration with the Diaspora, a significant and mostly untapped resource, that could assist the Region in engendering innovation and in this regard, online facilities could be designed to engage the Diaspora;
- (ii) Ensuring that projects were designed in the best interest of the Region before approaching International Development Partners (IDPs) for funding. This required collaboration among Member States, creation of synergies and presentation of a cohesive and united approach;
- (iii) Including existing ICT systems and technologies in the development of projects based on needs of the Region. This was demonstrated by The UWI teacher training pilot project that utilised the advisory services of a consultant in consolidating existing systems;
- (iv) Extending interventions where possible, from one (1) Member States to other Member States with similar needs in order to maximise benefits at the sub-regional or regional levels;
- (v) The Meeting was advised that ITU as a UN body responded to requests for assistance from its members and where there were similar requests, assistance was consolidated and projectised to benefits these States where appropriate;
- (vi) It was suggested that areas for which assistance could be extended at the regional level included youth innovation, competition law and early warning systems and disaster management given that Member States have undertaken work in these areas at the CARICOM level;
- (vii) Developing a Single ICT Space using the OECS as a model for governance that could be extended to the wider CARICOM Region. It was noted that the OECS countries had similar regulatory systems at the national level such as e-government, e-procurement, e-customs and e-legislation which could be consolidated as a regional system. Similarly, the other Member States had similar systems that could be incorporated toward establishing a single ICT space. It was pointed out that where systems may differ they could be harmonised as much as possible. It was further suggested that where regional systems or applications were developed, that they be packaged and made available for sale by other countries that may be interested in these products. This would also contribute to the development of the Single ICT Space;
- (viii) Developing a mechanism for information sharing among Member States was also critical;
- (ix) Fostering closer collaboration with the private sector through strengthening relationships with CANTO;

- (x) Expanding broadband availability to Member States to facilitate the full development and integration of ICTs across the Region is considered to be critical;
- (xi) Engaging youth by utilising more accessible and youth friendly materials and constructively utilising their assets in the development, implementation and adaptation of a Regional ICT Strategy.

With respect to the issue of Incentivising Investment in Broadband in the Caribbean,
the main issues arising from the discussion related to –

- (i) The observation that even with incentives such as universal service funds in the un-served or under-served areas there appeared not to be uptake by service providers in terms of offer their services;
- (ii) The view that the use of universal service funds appeared to be linked either to their alignment to a national ICT strategy or situations where the operators and service providers had the ability to suggest projects for use of the universal service funds;
- (iii) The observation that even with universal service funds, the absence of other incentives related to capital equipment could impact on uptake by service providers;
- (iv) The suggestion that the countries of the Region were behind in terms of light touch regulations. The use of government policies and regulations regarding local content and service improvement to address penetration and coverage issues;
- (v) The use of IXPS by providers in the Region to help circulate local content in the Region;
- (vi) The need for service providers – notwithstanding their obligations to their shareholders – to view themselves as partners in the development process;
- (vii) It was suggested that having regard to advances in technology, service providers needed to review their business models and moving off the beaten path consider reducing costs which would in turn help to increase uptake and usage by consumers. Service providers needed to work in partnership with the governments and regulators to help in the realisation the desired levels of development;
- (viii) The point was made that while there appeared to be difficulties across the Region in terms of broadband access, this was not the case with signals for cell phones. It appeared that the service providers did not put as much effort into ensuring that there was wide coverage in terms of broadband;
- (ix) The fact that broadband connections constituted an important criterion determining the rankings of countries. While this was so, most persons had access to the Internet on their smartphones but this was not taken into account in determining the rankings.

Were this to be taken into account, there could be improvement in the rankings of CANTO members;

- (x) It was posited that there was faster innovation taking place with mobile technology than there was with broadband technology and this was a possible reason for the disparity in penetration rates between cell phones and broadband access. The point was made that there were no statistical standards for measuring penetration and this was an issue to be looked at by CANTO and other organisations in the Region;
- (xi) Digital switchover and the observation that it was the responsibility of governments and regulatory bodies in the Region to address issues related to the spectrum for analog TV. The CTU had embarked on its Caribbean Spectrum Planning and Management Project which had been launched in 2013. Much of the work to be undertaken related to digital switchover and, in this regard, the Caribbean Spectrum Management Task Force would be re-established and it was the expectation that LIME and Digicel and the other service providers in the Region would be part of this Task Force and participate in the process. There was a policy framework which ought to be used by different governments to guide their use of the spectrum;
- (xii) The technologies associated with the deployment of broadband services and the role of regulators and regulatory bodies in relaxing regulations/restrictions linked to broadband services;
- (xiii) The fact that the delivery of broadband services was no longer restricted to copper but was now possible through fibre and there were no restrictions placed on service providers and operators in respect of the latter.

THE COTED:

Approved the Implementation Plan for the Regional Digital Development Strategy;

Noted the report from the ICT Lead Agencies on activities in the context of the RDDS and its Implementation Plan;

Considered the issues flagged by Officials including -

- (i) agreement that the diaspora is an untapped resource that could assist the Region;
- (ii) the advantages of a coordinated and collaborate approach implementation and requests for assistance;
- (iii) the best practice lessons to be learn from the OECS initiatives;
- (iv) the importance of fostering closer collaboration with the private sector;
- (v) the need for incentivising investment in broad band.

4.6 Governance and Collaboration Mechanisms for Implementing the RDDS

The Meeting considered **pages 4.5-1 to 4.5-6 of the Report of Officials** and received a PowerPoint presentation in respect of **Governance and Collaboration Mechanisms for Implementing the RDDS**. The **Secretariat representative** explained that the Meeting of Officials had received a brief presentation on the status of the Region in respect of governance.

Reference was made to the decisions of the last Meeting of Senior ICT Officials held in December 2011 in Grenada, viz –

THE MEETING:

“Recalled that the COTED had approved that the regional steering committee be split into two (2) groups: Senior ICT Officials and Lead ICT Agencies;

Noted that the COTED ministers would be tasked with annually reviewing the governance structure and that the new governance structure would be presented to Heads by the Lead Head of Government for ICT in March 2012;

Recognised that the addition of telecommunications to the definition of ICT had proved a significant coordination challenge for Member States given that ICT and telecommunications were often under the remit of different Ministries;

Recommended that a national central ICT Unit be established to drive the daily work of the relevant Ministries;

Also recommended a steering committee with representation from all stakeholders to ensure that the national and regional development objectives are addressed and also to ensure buy-in and success;

Also noted that the ICT Lead Agencies would meet at least two (2) times per year or as often as necessary;

Further noted that ICT Lead Agencies would participate in the Meeting of the Senior ICT Officials;

Acknowledged the efforts by Member States to establish a national ICT governance structure;

Agreed that the Secretariat would circulate a proposed National Structure for the Member States to consider for possible adaption and adoption.”

The **Secretariat representative** drew the attention of the Meeting to the entry of new entities into the governance landscape since the last Meeting of ICT Officials in 2011 and these were identified as follows –

: **at the regional level –**

- (i) Commission on the Economy;
- (ii) Science and Technology Committee (Prime Minister, Grenada) – January 2014;

: **at the level of the Secretariat –**

- ICT Cluster (CTU, CCS, CKLN, CBU, CARICAD).

The **Secretariat representative** drew attention to the fact that the Meeting of Officials had recalled the decisions of the COTED in 2011 regarding –

- (i) the appointment of a focal point at the national level and at the regional level;
- (ii) approaches to treating with Ministerial Meetings in terms of scheduling;
- (iii) the need for the reports of the CTU Ministerial Meetings and seminars to be sent to the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community;
- (iv) the formalisation of a relationship with ECTEL, and
- (v) the sharing of the reports of the ITU, UNESCO, CANTO.

The **Secretariat representative** informed the Meeting that at the Officials Meeting it was reported that, within the context of HIPCAR project, the ITU participated in three (3) areas as follows –

- (i) Legislation;
- (ii) Policy regulation;
- (iii) Cybercrime;

It was suggested that there was need for Information for All Programme (IFAP) to be more visible in the Region.

It was clarified that the CARICOM Secretariat was not engaged in capacity-building to a significant extent and that capacity-building fell within the purview of the CTU and the other implementing agencies.

In the ensuing discussion –

- (i) It was agreed that the matter of the inclusion of IFAP as a collaborating entity in the ICT landscape would be referred [by national ICT focal points] to the ICT lead agencies in the Region for consideration – during the second quarter of 2014 - and subsequent submission to the next Special Meeting of the COTED on ICT;
- (ii) **The Secretary-General** gave the undertaking that the Secretariat would coordinate the scheduling/planning of meetings having regard, *inter alia*, to Ministerial Meetings of the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) in order to ensure that Ministers were not called out to meet too often;
- (iii) Owing to the fact that Chief Information Officers (CIOs) did not necessarily fall under the authority of the Ministers of the COTED, even though they were an important part of the ICT arrangements in the Region, there was recognition that appropriate language/mechanisms ought to be found to include these Officials in the ICT governance structures;
- (iv) It was suggested that a recommendation could be made to Heads of Government that in configuring their Ministries they make the information portfolio an integral part of ICT or ensure that there was some overlap between Information and ICT.

THE COTED:

Urged that Member States report to the Secretariat by **mid-February 2014** any updates with respect to National ICT Governance issues;

Strongly urged Member States to appoint a focal point and an alternate, to treat with ICT matters and convey said information with contact details to the CARICOM Secretariat by **15 March 2014**;

Agreed that Ministerial Meetings, preceded by Preparatory Meetings of Senior ICT Officials and Chief Information Officers, will be convened in November of every year;

Also agreed that greater use would be made of the Inter-Sessional Committee of the COTED and Meetings of ICT Officials in between Meetings of the COTED.

5. RESOURCE MOBILISATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCING THE REGIONAL ICT AGENDA

The Meeting considered **pages 5-1 to 5-7 of the Working Document** and received a **PowerPoint presentation** in respect of **Resource Mobilisation Opportunities for Advancing the Regional ICT Agenda**. The **Secretariat representative**, by way of background drew the attention of the Meeting to the following regional strategies to be implemented for which resources would be required and which were either specific to ICT or which had a strong ICT bias –

- (i) The Regional Digital Development Strategy (RDDS);
- (ii) The Regional E-Government Strategy;
- (iii) The Regional Aid-for-Trade Strategy; and
- (iv) The Regional Plan on Services (currently under development) and which has ICT identified as a priority area.

Identified in the presentation were some possible actions as these related to financing as follows -

- (i) Raising the priority of ICT projects and focus on the use of ICT;
- (ii) Reviewing existing financial mechanisms and explore new mechanisms to provide financing as outlined in the Regional Digital Development Strategy (RDDS) –
 - (a) Increasing efforts to attract major private, national and foreign investments (for application of digital technologies) by developing a predictable enabling investment environment;
 - (b) The development of Universal Service Funds in all Member States;
 - (c) Exploring Foreign Direct Investment;
 - (d) The establishment of an ICT Sustainability Fund (with funds from development partners, private sector, and venture capitalists).

Reference was made to a Regional Resource Mobilisation Strategy which it was anticipated would address a range of issues and which had been articulated in a number of sectors and which might require referral to the Heads of Government through the Ministers of the COTED.

The Meeting was informed that the development of a Resource Mobilisation Strategy is on the work programme of the Commission on the Economy.

Cited in the presentation were project proposals which were available for sharing with international development partners (IDPs). These had been developed for presentation at the ITU Connect The Americas Summit and for the (Caribbean Research and Learning Network) C@ribNET Phase 2 and Phase 3 being pursued by CKLN.

The list of areas for regional projects - amounting to approximately US\$113 billion – included -

- (i) CARICOM as a Single ICT space;

- (ii) Broadband;
- (iii) Spectrum management;
- (iv) The E-marketplace;
- (v) Capacity building + climate change; and
- (vi) Emergency Telecoms.

Projects that had been submitted are contained in the table cited below -

Institution/Organisation	Name of Project	# of Project Submitted	Budget (US\$)	Sub-Total
Caribbean Export Development Agency Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organisations (CANTO)	Market Intelligence System	1	325,000.00	325,000
	Developing Apps for National and Economic Development	2		
		1	1,332,150.00	
	Regional G2S/B2B e-Market	1	1,417,000.00	2,748,150
Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat	Development of a Regional ICT Space for CARICOM countries CARICOM Human Capacity- Building and Digital Literacy Project Development of a Regional Information System	3		
		1	38,500,000.00	
		1	20,000,000.00	
		1	2,300,000.00	60,800,000
Caribbean Telecommunication Union (CTU)	Caribbean Spectrum Management	1	3,000,000.00	3,000,000
University of the West Indies (Mona) (UWI)	Single Virtual University Space	1	12,313,222.00	12,313,222.00
Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN)	CKLN III/C@ribNET II	1	18,800,000.00	18,800,000
Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)	Connecting CSME	1	15,300,000.00	15,300,000.00

The projects were all intended to engender –

- (i) Greater Public Sector use and Citizen Adoption of e-Government Processes;
- (ii) Greater Global Recognition of and Rewards from the Caribbean Brand;
- (iii) Growth in Innovation and Development of New ICT Products and Services;
- (iv) Expanded Job Creation, Entrepreneurship and New Business Development; and
- (v) Highly Educated and Well-Trained Caribbean people available to the ICT Sector.

The Secretariat representative also highlighted some key issues raised by the Officials as follows: –

- (i) The fact that, apart from resource mobilisation efforts in the context of growth and development and the work of the Commission on the Economy, there were possibilities for project proposals for resource mobilisation as these related specifically to ICT - e.g. through public private partnerships, and focussed approaches to the International Development Partners (IDPs). In this connection, proposals could be centred around ICT as an enabler and a part of a more holistic approach;

- (ii) The need to identify possible strategies for resource mobilisation and the fact that ICT as a sector would need to interface with the Commission on the Economy and have the opportunity to make inputs into the way in which resources would be utilised for ICT as a sector or for cross-cutting initiatives involving ICT;
- (iii) The possibility of the Region benefitting from funding under the eleventh European Development Fund (11th EDF). In this regard, ICT needed to be identified as a priority, firstly at the national level and then at the regional level as a precursor to securing EDF resources or indeed any other donor resources for the sector;
- (iv) The imperative of ensuring that key sector stakeholders were included in the negotiations with IDPs for resources;
- (v) There was also need, during the negotiations to identify the relevant organisations or institutions as the entities that would be taking the lead on behalf of the Region in respect of specific issues/in specific sectors or areas;
- (vi) The fact that the CTU – as an organisation which was concerned with ICT - was collaborating with the IDB and had engaged a number of private sector entities that were willing to establish a fund which would be accessible to Member States;
- (vii) The observation that many countries in the Region needed to upgrade the wide area networks (WANs) and once there was collective agreement on this, the possibility existed for them to benefit from economies of scale, provided that the governments were on board as part of a collaborative approach. There was willingness on the part of the private sector to provide significant discounts as well as contribute to a fund;
- (viii) The view that there were projects that had been submitted as national projects that could be expanded and treated as regional projects;
- (ix) A suggestion that a project proposal for cybercrime ought to be included among the list of projects for resource mobilisation. It remained, however to be determined how this would be done;
- (x) A call for a revival of the arrangements that obtained during CWC 2007 and CARIPASS as an initiative that could achieve the desired results;
- (xi) The view that there was need for Member States to accord priority to better organising themselves and sharing information, in order to benefit from available funds including ensuring the right people were at the negotiating table;
- (xii) The view that there was need for greater focus on implementation generally in the Region. In this regard, a recommendation was made for the establishment of a regional monitoring and evaluation network which would meet periodically (virtually) in order to address implementation issues. It was stated that through E-GRIP such a

monitoring and evaluation initiative had been established and this could inform what was being proposed for establishment at the regional level;

- (xiii) The suggestion that in addition to finance officials, ICT officials should form part of the delegations meeting and negotiating with IDPs for resources to fund regional initiatives;
- (xiv) The importance of including in the presentation to Ministers an element which either spoke to the minimisation of risk or approaches to ensuring the success of projects and initiatives;

In the ensuing discussion, the Meeting was informed that Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, during his visit to the Region, had indicated willingness to examine a proposal from CARICOM with respect to ICT. While not promising funds, he committed to leveraging influence in having the projects funded. The Secretary-General had been in contact with the United States Embassy in Guyana which informed that the proposal was received.

The Secretary-General noted that public-private sector partnership have not been undertaken to a large extent in the Region and that institutions devised projects based on the needs indicated by Member States. The Meeting agreed that the Heads of Government should be asked to use their influence to access funds from the international community, governments and the private sector.

The Trinidad and Tobago representative gave the undertaking to consult with his Cabinet with a view of obtaining funding for ICT related programmes.

The Meeting was further informed that the Commission of the Economy had established a committee to address on resource mobilisation that had been examining the issue of funding for ICT including the use of excess liquidity in the Banking System using commercial resources. It was also suggested that funds could be obtained from the Climate Change Fund by formulating projects that had elements of ICT.

THE COTED:

Agreed that for the Region to make any positive strides with regard to Information Society development, the resource needs, including for the human resources for implementing agencies/Lead Agencies, must be addressed urgently;

Also agreed that existing strategies, programmes as identified need to be resourced as a matter of urgency;

Mandated the ICT Lead Agencies to examine the Digital Dividend issues and any opportunities and forward a progress report to the Secretariat by 31 May 2014 to inform the submission to the Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in July 2014;

Also mandated the CARICOM Secretariat to liaise with the other lead agencies to identify funding /resource partners for the regional projects as identified under the Connect The Americas Initiative;

Recommended that Heads mandate that ICT and the development of the Digital Economy be agreed as one of the priority areas for the Region in the 11th EDF programming;

Also recommended that Heads mandate that CARICOM ICT/Information Society/Digital Economy issues be included as part of the regional policy and emphasised as priority in any participation or input into all global development aid initiatives as early as possible in 2014;

Further recommended that Heads use their influence to access funds from the international community, governments and the private sector;

Noted that the undertaking by the Trinidad and Tobago representative to consult with his Cabinet with a view of obtaining funding for ICT related programmes;

Further agreed that the key stakeholders ought to be part of the process during the negotiations with IDPs for available funding;

Agreed –

- (i) to recommend that where relevant, in addition to finance officials, ICT officials should form part of the delegations meeting and negotiating with IDPs for resources to fund national initiatives;
- (ii) that there was also need, during the negotiations to identify the relevant organisations or institutions as the entities that would be taking the lead on behalf of the Region in respect of specific issues in specific sectors or areas;

Recognised the importance of –

- (i) **incorporating** in project proposals, elements which speak either to the minimisation of risk or approaches to ensuring the success of projects and initiatives;
- (ii) **providing** for monitoring and evaluation.

INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS PROJECT SUBMISSION FOR CONNECT THE AMERICAS SUMMIT

Institution/Organisation	Name of Project	# of Project Submitted	Budget (U\$)	Sub-Total
Caribbean Export Development Agency	Market Intelligence System	1	395,000.00	395,000
Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organisations (CANTO)		2		
	Developing Apps for National and Economic Development	1	1,332,150.00	
	Regional G2B/B2B e-Market	1	1,417,000.00	2,749,150
Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat		3		
	Development of a Regional ICT Space for CARICOM countries	1	38,500,000.00	
	CARICOM Human Capacity- Building and Digital Literacy Project	1	20,000,000.00	
	Development of a Regional Information System	1	2,300,000.00	60,800,000
Caribbean Telecommunication Union (CTU)	Caribbean Spectrum Management	1	3,000,000.00	3,000,000
University of the West Indies (Mona) (UWI)	Single Virtual University Space	1	12,313,222.00	12,313,222.00
Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN)	CKLN III/C@ribNET II	1	18,600,000.00	18,600.00
Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)	Connecting CSME	1	15,300,000.00	15,300,000.00

TOTAL PROJECTS SUBMITTED: 15
TOTAL BUDGET FOR PROJECTS: \$113,157,372.00

6. ICT AGENDA FOR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

The **Secretariat representative** informed the Meeting that there had been much discussion on this Agenda Item at the Meeting of Officials with the result that at the end of the Meeting of Officials were very seized with the urgency with which the Region needed to be rescued. The Officials had also been seized with the fact that there were issues specific and peculiar to the knowledge economy and the digital economy that had never before been fully ventilated at the level of Heads of Government and the time was opportune to do so. In this regard, attention was drawn to the fact that there were about twenty-five items which had been identified as possibilities for the Heads Agenda.

It was recognised that there had been some benchmarks set in the regional strategy that had not been examined and it was felt that these ought to be brought back to the fore. In this regard, a decision was made that this ought to be included as part of the work of the Commission on the Economy. This notwithstanding, there had been unsuccessful efforts made at the Meeting to press for two (2) goals that could be pursued as a Region.

Key sectors that had been brought to the fore for immediate focus included –

- (i) Agriculture;
- (ii) Export services (including tourism); and
- (iii) Infrastructural services (including energy and ICT).

The **Secretariat representative** explained that it had been the desire of the Meeting of Officials to have some specific issues highlighted as ICT and ICT-related. These related to –

ICT

- (i) Enabling applications;
- (ii) Smart households in every Member State;
- (iii) The single ICT space and its integral role in supporting the CSME in establishing and operating the Single Space and a competitive innovative environment;
- (iv) Cyber Security;
- (v) A framework for recognising ICT skills;
- (vi) New avenues and areas for graduation/qualification and re-skilling;
- (vii) A database of ICT professionals in the public sector; and
- (viii) Coupling monitoring and evaluation with establishing the Single ICT space.

Governance

Resource Mobilisation

Resource Mobilisation and the extent to which ICT specific initiatives and resource possibilities could take into account and be taken into account in initiatives to be pursued at the level of the Commission on the Economy. Already highlighted for consideration at the Community level are the possible establishment of a Regional Infrastructural Development Fund, access to excess liquidity in the banking sector, accessing climate change funds, PPPs and cooperation agreements with our development partners.

The Secretariat representative explained that the Meeting of Officials had discussed the manner in which it would craft its presentation to the Heads of Government and it was proposed that the Heads of Government could be based on the following outline -

- (i) The **current environment** (regional/international, financial/economic, human resource) as it related to ICT;
- (ii) The **importance of ICT and what it does** (its contribution to GDP and employment);
- (iii) **Areas of focus for ICT particularly in 2014-2015** (E-governance, smart households etc.);
- (iv) **Expected results;**
- (v) **Critical requirements for achieving the desired results** (an indication to Ministers of what was required in order to manage expectations) and provision for monitoring and evaluation; and
- (vi) **Recommendations/actions required.**

Within that framework the COTED should therefore –

- (i) **Consider** the following areas and the issues outlined below -
 - (a) Cyber Security;
 - (b) Broadband Access;
 - (c) Disaster management/emergency telecommunications;
 - (d) Regional (Regulatory) Competition Authority;
 - (e) Review of the OECS model presented under **(Agenda Item 4.4 Implementation of the Action Plan for the RDDS)**;

- (f) The conduct of regular national ICT household surveys (to gather important data that would guide policy decisions);
- (g) The establishment of a model which would facilitate the assessment of the ICT initiatives that had been put in place with a view to determining the impact. (Such an initiative had been embarked upon by the ITU in 2011);
- (h) In the context of the public sector, the strengthening of the enterprise architecture. The OECS, through its E-GRIP programme had done this successfully. Under the OECS initiative a framework had been approved for achieving the desired goal as proposed by Price Waterhouse, called The Open Government Architecture Framework (TOGAF);
- (i) The adoption by Member States of standards applicable to Information and information management (**e.g. ISO 27001- Information Security Management standard**);
- (j) The empowerment of young people by equipping them with the requisite skills (particularly programming skills) to invest and participate in the Single ICT space/CSME;
- (k) E-Government (the sourcing of the requisite funding for the public sector in order to engender an enabling environment for competitiveness);
- (l) Resource mobilisation;
- (ii) **Take** cognisance of other issues in the context of ICT as follows –
 - (a) the harmonisation of competition legislation in the context of the Single ICT Space;
 - (b) the fact that Compete Caribbean and the Council of Europe were willing to fund regional projects related to competition law;
 - (c) the need for early warning systems;
 - (d) focus on knowledge management in order to learn from information gathered.
- (iii) There was consensus at the Meeting that the CARICOM Secretariat would identify - based on the deliberations of the ICT Ministers - a subset of critical issues with a view to crafting the submission which would be made to the Twenty-Fifth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government in February 2014;
- (iv) There was agreement that a one (1) year interval between Meetings of the Special COTED - ICT was too long. In this regard, it was agreed that -

- (a) meetings of the Special Meeting of the COTED ICT should be held at six-month intervals;
- (b) the next Special Meeting of the COTED ICT should be convened in May 2014 and the following options were tabled with respect to the timing for that meeting -
 - (i) just prior to the Thirty-Fifth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in July 2014; or
 - (ii) in the fringes of the Caribbean Telecommunication Union Ministerial Meeting or another appropriate meeting involving the ICT ministers of the Region;
- (v) Reference was made to the introduction by countries in the Region of tablets in the schools and the fact obtaining content online from CXC was a challenge. It was clarified that this was due to resource constraints being experienced by CXC.

In the ensuing discussion it was agreed that the CARICOM Secretariat would identify, based on the deliberations of the ICT Ministers with responsibility for ICT, a subset of critical issues with a view to crafting the submission which would be made to the Twenty-Fifth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in February 2014.

THE COTED:

Agreed that the CARICOM Secretariat would identify, based on the deliberations of the ICT Ministers, a subset of critical issues with a view to crafting the submission which would be made to the Twenty-Fifth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government in February 2014.

7. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COTED - ICT

The Meeting agreed that the next Meeting of the COTED – ICT would be held in May 2014.

THE COTED:

Agreed that the next Meeting would be in May 2014.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

8.1 Candidatures for ITU Positions

The **CTU representative** informed the Meeting that the Plenipotentiary Meeting of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) was scheduled to be held in Busan, Korea from 20 October to 7 November 2014 at which there would be elections to specific posts.

In this regard, at the present time, the only candidate for the position of Secretary-General was Dr. Houlin ZHAO of China. Dr. Zhou currently served as Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) of the ITU.

It was pointed out that the post of Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) was being contested by some six (6) candidates as outlined below -

- (i) Arm BANDAI - Egypt;
- (ii) Magdalena GAJ - Poland;
- (iii) Bruce GRACIE - Canada;
- (iv) Mongi HAMDI - Tunisia;
- (v) Malcolm JOHNSON - United Kingdom; and
- (vi) Shola TAYLOR - Nigeria.

The Meeting was also informed that the Government of Barbados had made a formal request to the ITU for a 'seat' on the ITU Council for the period 2015-2018. The Region should take the necessary steps to ensure that Barbados was shown to have the full support of the Region.

In the ensuing discussion, the Meeting expressed the view that it was important to support a candidate who had shown an interest in issues affecting the Region and in this regard, Member States agreed to support Shola Taylor of Nigeria. The Meeting also agreed to support Barbados' bid for a position on the ITU Council. The Meeting advised that the Region prepare expeditiously for the Meeting in Korea by, *inter alia*, preparing the required proxies for Member States that would not be able to attend in order to ensure that the full strength of a regional vote was fully exploited.

THE COTED:

Noted that the Plenipotentiary Meeting of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) was scheduled to be held in Busan, Korea from 20 October to 7 November 2014 at which ITU posts and position would be selected;

Agreed to recommend for the consideration of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR), Shola Taylor of Nigeria for the post of Deputy Secretary-General, ITU and Barbados for a seat on the Council;

Urged Member States prepare expeditiously for the Meeting in Korea by, inter alia, preparing the required proxies for Member States that would not be able to attend in order to ensure that the full strength of a regional vote was fully exploited.

8.2 Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum, 3–4 March 2014

The Hon. Minister from Saint Lucia informed the Meeting of the convening of the Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum on 3-4 March 2014 in London, United Kingdom. He suggested that it would be of benefit to the Region if it were represented by some Ministers who would each speak to specific issues on the Forum Agenda.

It was agreed that a small group of CARICOM Ministers would represent the Community at the Forum with each speaking to some of the key thematic issues on the Agenda, such as –

- (i) ICTs and disabilities;
- (ii) A Commonwealth Broadband Strategy;
- (iii) ICTs and Education; and
- (iv) A Commonwealth Cyber Governance Model.

THE COTED:

Agreed that a small group of CARICOM Ministers would represent the Community at the Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum on 3-4 March 2014 in London, United Kingdom, with each speaking to some of the key thematic issues on the Agenda;

Mandated the CARICOM Secretariat to coordinate the participation of the Community in the Forum.

Close of Meeting

There being no other issues to discuss, the Meeting ended with the usual exchange of courtesies.

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***Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat  
3 October 2014***

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|-------------------|---|------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Mr. Adrian Adams  | - | Maintenance and Reproduction<br>Assistant<br>Conference Services |

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**AGENDA**

1. OPENING
2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
3. PROCEDURAL MATTERS
4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) FOR INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS:
  - 4.1 ICT Enabling Regional Growth and Development
  - 4.2 A CARICOM Single ICT Space –Implementation of Key Elements
  - 4.3 Key Role of CKLN / C@ribNET
  - 4.4 Caribbean Telecommunication Union
  - 4.5 Implementation of Action Plan for the Regional Digital Development Strategy (RDDS)
  - 4.6 Governance and Collaboration Mechanisms for Implementing the RDDS
5. RESOURCE MOBILISATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCING THE REGIONAL ICT AGENDA
6. ICT AGENDA FOR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT
7. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COTED – ICT
8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:
  - 8.1 Candidatures for ITU Positions
  - 8.2 Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum, 3 – 4 Mar 2014

