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# 1 Overview of 2009 Caribbean ICT Roadshows

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## 1.1 St. Kitts and Nevis

The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis was the first destination of the Caribbean ICT Roadshow, which was held from 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2009. This event was held in association with the 5<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Internet Governance Forum. The programme was developed to complement a European Commission funded project on ICT for Improving Education, Diversification and Competitiveness (ICT4EDC) being undertaken in the Federation.

With a tag-line “ICT for All”, the Roadshow sought to address the perception that ICT was only for certain sectors of the national community. The programme focused on the layman and the need for all citizens to embrace ICT. There were excellent examples of ICT innovation and many recommendations were made for supporting ICT innovators. Participants were introduced to and encouraged to participate in the activities of international organisations that oversee the Internet.

A strong case was made for the establishment of an Internet Exchange Point in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and delegates indicated their intent to pursue this issue.

The highly interactive Youth Forum was extremely well received by an audience comprising young people from 6 to 18 and several parents. The Forum addressed the dangers in cyberspace and introduced participants to the available podcasting tools on the Internet and demonstrated how they could be used to create indigenous content.

## 1.2 Antigua and Barbuda

In Antigua and Barbuda, the second destination, the ICT Roadshow was held in association with the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual ICT Fest from 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2009. The joint event attracted more than seven thousand participants including large numbers of students. The proceedings were broadcast via television and streamed on the internet.

The Youth Forum was an unequivocal success. The dynamism of the session drew many adult observers, including the Prime Minister, Hon. Baldwin Spencer. The response prompted the introduction of a session entitled “What Parents and Guardians Don’t Know”. This was also enthusiastically received.

The Innovators’ Forum demonstrated a wealth of creativity and entrepreneurship in the on the use of ICT in education and marketing. The depth of the discussion in this forum underscored the need for sharing of the innovators’ work throughout the region.

### 1.3 Belize

In August the Government of Belize, by an Act of Parliament, took over the operations of the incumbent ICT service provider. The changed environment was addressed by the Belize edition of the ICT Roadshow which was held on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October.

This Roadshow sought to highlight the opportunities and pitfalls of the new environment, define the elements of a sound policy and regulatory framework, mobilise ICT stakeholders to contribute to ICT development and to lay the groundwork for an Internet Exchange Point in Belize.

The Roadshow programme made a profound impression on delegates. Members of the national IT professionals' association, which had been dormant for more than eight years, were motivated to revitalize the association and to participate in national ICT development.

### 1.4 St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Roadshow, held on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October complemented and supported an existing a European Union funded ICT Development Programme.

This Roadshow introduced two new features:-

1. The Hot Seat - A panel Discussion on a topical subject. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Hot Seat addressed the issue of the high cost of Broadband.
2. The Community Outreach Programme – Sessions conducted in villages designed to reach citizens in their communities to explain the effective use of ICT in everyday life. The Roadshow visited the communities of Mesopotamia and Bequia to educate citizens on the use of cell phone features which could improve efficiency, productivity and reduce costs. Questions from villagers led to discussions on e-waste and cyber-security.

This new element of the Roadshow brought lay-people together in a non-threatening environment and responded to their wide range of questions on the effective use of ICT tools.

Innovators from Antigua and Barbuda attended this Roadshow, sharing their experiences and information which local innovators found to be invaluable.

More than 300 students and teachers participated in the Youth Forum. The highly interactive session generated animated discussion and was very well received.

## 1.5 Curacao

The Roadshow in Curacao was held from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> October in association with consultations for the development of a National Plan and the celebration of 100 years of international telecommunications. This joint event served as a launch pad for planning the transition of the island to self government.

This Roadshow, presented in Papiamento and English featured consultative sessions for seven policy areas, to create the framework for a Master Plan for the Curacao Information Society. International, regional and local specialists provided the context and worked together with national stakeholders to produce the preliminary Master Plan.

There was a very strong focus on ICT tools for small and medium sized enterprises with sessions dedicated to demonstrating the innovative use of ICT tools.

ICT innovation in primary schools was compellingly demonstrated by 8 primary school children and their teacher using an electronic whiteboard. This demonstration emphasized the need to adapt the curriculum and teaching processes for effectively incorporating ICT in the classroom.

## 1.6 Suriname

Given Suriname's landmass and the attendant challenges of service provision, a 2-day workshop entitled "Bringing Broadband to Rural Areas" preceded the Roadshow in Suriname on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December.

A Declaration on broadband service provision prepared by the workshop's delegates was presented to the Minister responsible for ICT, H.E Richel Apinsa, at the Opening Ceremony of the ICT Roadshow.

The bi-lingual Roadshow dealt primarily with the elements of a National ICT Plan and pointed to the need for greater consultation with stakeholders in the process.

A highlight of the Innovators' Forum was the Government's use of ICT in the development and verification of the electoral list for the up-coming national election. The use of ICT in electricity generation and distribution and the prospect of the deployment of broadband over power lines (BPL) for providing consumers with Internet access was a very encouraging development.

The high cost of Broadband, the subject of the Hot Seat, generated animated debate. A compelling case was made for an IXP in Suriname and delegates publicly committed to support and participate in the IXP.

The interactive Youth Forum hosted over seven hundred (700) primary and secondary school children covering topics ranging from Dangers in Cyberspace to "Cool Tech for Teens".

Delegates were firm in their commitment to collaborate in fostering ICT development in Suriname.