

## Interactive Panel 1: Bankrolling broadband: is government back?

### Summary

The objective of this session was to have Panelists debating on the role of the government and the different strategies for funding broadband rollout. Participated in this Session Edmond MANSOOR, Minister of State, Antigua and Barbuda; Dionisio PEREZ-JÁCOME FRISCIONE, Minister of Communications and Transport, Mexico; Eduardo E. JAEN, General Administrator, Autoridad Nacional para la Innovación Gubernamental, Panama; Carolina COSSE, President, ANTEL, Uruguay; Roderick KIRWAN, General Counsel, Cable & Wireless Communications Caribbean Operations, Jamaica; Glenda MEDFORD, Managing Director, GEMFORD Consultancy, Barbados and CANTO representative; Javier RECIO, Vice-President, SATMEX, Mexico and, Raúl ECHEBERRÍA, LACNIC Executive Director and President of the Board of ISOC.

The Session was moderated by ITU BDT Director, Mr. Brahim Sanou, who addressed the audience highlighting that the potential of broadband networks to help deliver efficiently core public services remains under-exploited and that improvements in technology and reductions in cost, ensuring affordable broadband access will be regarded as being as vital to social and economic development. Mr. Sanou addressed each of the Panelists with questions that surrounded the related topic and the challenges that need to be overcome.

During the Session, discussions centered around (1) investments on broadband infrastructure (2) existing gaps that need to be taken into account (3) Public-Private Partnerships-PPPs (4) involvement of the Academia

Training programs for final users; increase coverage in rural and isolated areas; acceleration of broadband penetration rate; price reduction; effective use of Universal Service Fund; and, development of public policies to attract investment, were some of the challenges that were raised during the discussions.

To respond to these important issues Panelists highlighted the importance for government and industry to share information and to clearly define what is necessary as to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize the use of scarce financial resources – the possibility of having a consultative board to

consider different views was suggested. Many Panelists endorsed the implementation of capacity building programs, specifically focusing on youth as well as the adoption of initiatives to promote accessibility of teachers and students. Entrepreneurship, Job creation, innovation and sustainability were suggested as means to accelerate broadband penetration rate.

The audience raised the issue of involving the scientific and technological sector and Panelists agreed on the important role the academia can play. Many mentioned the contribution that the technological sector can make in terms of innovation, for the application of ideas in the private sector and for the implementation pilot projects. Some Panelists presented that satellite communication is an issue that should be considered since most projects depend on satellite capacity. The general consensus was that government and industry players in general should work hand-in-hand to foster a greater broadband deployment.

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