

Minister says e-government and e-commerce must be promoted

A LOCAL government minister says that e-government is critical to the economies of the Caribbean, and regional governments need to place more emphasis and focus on it.

Delivering the feature address at the opening ceremony of the second consultation of the HIP-CAR Project 'Enhancing Competitiveness in the Caribbean Through the Harmonisation of ICT Policies, Legislation and Regulatory Procedures' at the Crane Resort yesterday, Minister of State in

the Ministry of Finance, Telecommunications and Energy, Senator Darcy Boyce, contended that e-government is key in our economies to ensure that we get all the efficiencies that we can out of the Government sector, and make the funds being spent, go much further than they now do.

Senator Boyce is suggesting that this area is one that not enough work has been done on as yet, but he suggested that it should be pursued, considering that in the Caribbean, Government

is not only a major employer, but involved in numerous ways in various sectors of the economy. "It is important that countries spend some more time looking at e-government and sharing the experiences of those in the Caribbean, sharing the experiences of European countries, sharing the experiences the ITU (International Telecommunications Union) has been able to

garner from around the world, so that we can promote some best practices and best solutions for us

in the Caribbean in terms of how we can improve the productivity and the processes within our governmental sector," he stated.

The Minister reminded those gathered that information and communication technologies (ICTs) afford countries in the region the opportunity to compete with the best in the world and on the same terms as they operate.

"Therefore, the matter of our competitiveness using ICTs must be very high on our agenda. We

must understand that what we are doing is not merely making legislation to regulate, legislation to understand policy, but our legislation and our policy must be geared towards improving the competitiveness of our countries," he maintained.

Turning his attention to e-commerce, the Minister contended that regional governments, in addition to ensuring that the model legislation is tweaked to meet the needs of the individual countries, they also needed to spend some

time working with the financial sectors to make sure that they are also board to make e-commerce much more of a reality than it currently is. He noted that while legislation is important, efforts must be made to ensure that the ban

and the other financial institutions are supported by the efforts and are prepared to make the investments and give the necessary assistance to business people and entrepreneurs to move e-commerce further along (JRT)

BARBADOS

ADVOCATE

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