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## **HIPCAR HOLDS STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP**

**Basseterre, St. Kitts, August 22, 2012 (SKNIS):** The Harmonization of ICT policies and legislation across the Caribbean (HIPCAR) Project has provided an opportunity for St. Kitts and Nevis to review, adopt and make amendments to the electronic transactions legislation during a recent workshop.

At the August 20 to 21 workshop, stakeholders gave their input on new rules that were being proposed to govern electronic transactions in St. Kitts and Nevis. These stakeholders included participants from financial institutions, law enforcement, telecommunication firms, the Bar Association and the intellectual property field.

In his opening remarks Curt Lewis, Permanent Secretary for Information Technology, expressed his eagerness to hear the contributions towards the creation of policies and the development of the necessary regulatory structure.

"This is very significant to investment in ICT infrastructure and services and provides the enabling platform for electronic commercial activity," Mr. Lewis stated.

He also noted that the HIPCAR Project has already made important contributions to improvements in the Federation's legislation, for example, Interception of Communications Amendment Bill 2012, Electronic Crimes Amendment Bill 2012 and the Evidence Act of 2011.

In his remarks, Gilberto Martins de Almeida, Regional HIPCAR Consultant, stressed the importance for the Federation to upgrade its ICT laws.

"The development of the ICT legislation is important for St. Kitts and Nevis to continue its national growth, Mr. Martins de Almeida noted. "This country should take advantage of its small geographic size as there can be a very cohesive and integrated ICT legislation and regulation."

Ophelia Blanchard, e-Government Services and Information Coordinator in the Department of Information Technology, stated in her presentation that HIPCAR responds to the challenges and opportunities of information and communication technologies, its contribution to political, social, economic and environmental development within the region. She also noted what the project has been achieved so far.

"This project has resulted in the creation of a policy -legal and regulatory- framework conducive to significant investments in ICT infrastructures and services, Ms. Blanchard revealed. "It also meets the needs expressed by the beneficiary countries in building capacity for regulating the information society and enabling the environment."