Caribbean
Telecommunication
Union

Down to Zero

Roaming Charges in a Single ICT space for the Caribbean

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The Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU)

- <u>History:</u> Established in 1989 to coordinate/harmonize telecommunications policy development + ICT on 2004

- <u>Members</u>: 20 governments + 8 affiliate international agencies

- <u>Governance</u>: Council of Ministers, Executive; Ad hoc Technical conferences

- <u>Programmes</u>: Spectrum Management; Internet Governance; ICT Regulatory Forum; ICT capacity building and education;

- <u>Flagship Initiative</u> – Implementation of road map for Single ICT space for the Caribbean

The Regional ICT Policy Objectives

- Goal of CARICOM (Wider Caribbean) single space:

- *"An ICT-enabled borderless space that fosters economic, social and cultural integration for the betterment of Caribbean citizens."*

- OECS (Eastern Caribbean) single space – implementation through OECS Commission, ECTEL,

Key Elements of Single space policy

- *Common frameworks for Governments, ICT service providers and consumers* - Quality of Service standards, Roaming, top level domain name management; local content; open data, licencing and authorizations.

- *Regional Broadband* - ubiquitous and affordable.

- *Social Bandwidth* - dedicated network capacity.

- *Voice and Data Roaming* - elimination of all charges in the region.

- *Harmonized policies and plans* – spectrum allocations, rules for competition, cyber security.

The Caribbean telecoms services landscape

- *Same service providers* across the region
- *Shared switching* – regional networks
- *High varied roaming rates* – voice and data
- *On-net preferential* customer treatment
- *Varied* customer service options
- *High domestic mobile rates* *(voice and data)*
- Service provider and ministerial pronouncements - *No region-wide roaming initiatives*
- Cellular data options – *"Roaming Off"*

The key tenets of CTU roaming policy

- *Greater citizen benefits* from advances in telecommunications technology and liberalization.
- Roam free area to *facilitate movement of labour.*
- Reduced charges as *predictable cost of doing business.*
- Roaming charges scaled down to *zero.*
- Application to *voice and data*
- *Area codes and geographical borders* do not increase costs
- (Caribbean trails other integrated areas e.g E.U)

Roaming - Role of the CTU

- *Advocacy* through the intergovernmental fora – COTED, the CHOG, OECS Council of Ministers
- *Policy coordination* through the CTU Council of Ministers – Strategic seminars
- *Coordination of regional positions* – seminars/meetings of civil society, academia, service providers, regulators, policy makers (governments)
- *Education and Awareness – CTU road shows,*
- *Industry lobby – regular engagements with service providers through CANTO*

Roaming - Challenge for the Caribbean

- The absence of *political integration/arrangements* (E.U. GCC, SADC)
- Roaming *cannot be controlled by single state (or single provider)*
- Negotiating an appropriate *institutional framework*
- Current ICT *policy fragmentation*
- The paucity of *political will*
- *Prioritizing roaming* as an ICT policy matter
- *Perception of loss* of tax revenue from a zero rate regime
- *Uncoordinated responses/approaches* to service providers

Thank You – Comments!

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