

# THE CARICOM CONNECTIVITY

## AGENDA: A Community Context for ICT



# CARICOM at a glance

- Countries: 15 + 5 associates
- Population: 15 million +
- Workforce: relatively young
- Languages: English, French, Dutch

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# CARICOM ICT Sector Index

- GDP 3 bands (High, medium, low)
- Telecom Liberalisation:
  - Demonopolisation within/outside WTO
  - Instruments of competition
- Penetration
  - fixed lines - 20% - 50%
  - Internet - > 13%
  - mobile - > 18%
- Ringed by major fibre optic systems (e.g. Americas II )
- Sector applications include:
  - Education( E-learning) health, energy, tourism, transnational business incl. E-Commerce, manufacturing, agriculture, E-government, culture, public information etc.)

# CARICOM ICT commitment 2003

- **Georgetown Declaration (universal service, application, content)**
  - Growing CSME (Chapter III)
    - Removal of restrictions
    - Increasing competitiveness
    - Supporting micro-business
    - **Encouraging new business applications incl. E-Commerce**
- **Adoption of the Connectivity Agenda and Plan of Action**
- **Charter of Civil Society**
  - Social gender transformation/cohesion/integration
  - Poverty reduction/wealth creation
  - Preservation & promotion of culture
  - Minimising “**digital divide**” & building capacity
  - HRD

# OBJECTIVE

- To provide the most favorable environment, on the most favorable terms,
  - for private investment,
  - Human Resource Development
  - creation of jobs,
  - enhanced productivity,
  - extensive and modernised public services, better quality of life and
  - universal opportunity to participate in the global information society
  - **CONNECTING CARICOM PEOPLE**
  - **CONNECTING CARICOM PEOPLE WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD**

# CARICOM AGENDA 2003

In accordance with hemispheric  
process:



**Infrastructure  
Application  
Content**

**Wide  
Participation**

**Innovation**

**Equity**

**Member  
States/  
Regional  
Activity**

# CARICOM - VISION ICT

- **Agenda 2003** recognises:
  - Need for a strategy that ensures a comprehensive ICT/Connectivity regime based on:
    - ✓ Design & implementation (regional institutions)
    - ✓ Promotion of use and access
  - Strategic Application of ICTs is essential for development in the Caribbean Community
  - **2-year Plan Schedule** – impacted by critical imperatives including:
    - ✓ CSME completion (2005)
    - ✓ FTAA implementation (2005)
    - ✓ WTO (2005)
    - ✓ WSIS 2005 (MDG)

# Opportunities / Benefits

- Global trade & investment increased
- Increased Competition
- Industry transformation
- **Technological leapfrogging**
- Access to basic services (incl. Financial )
- Improved governance
- Support for SMEs
- Increased information flow
- Reduction of poverty



# **Platform (Plan) of Action**

**Progress to date**



**E-  
Government  
and E-  
Governance**

**E - Learning**

**E-Commerce**

**Regional  
Plan of  
Action**

**Roles and  
responsibilities  
for CARICOM  
Institutions**

**Public  
Education  
Programme**

**Strengthening  
capacity of the  
CARICOM  
Secretariat**

# E-commerce

- Draft Report from the Working Group on Services (2003)
- Community Guidelines for E-commerce
- Report on “*Community policy, rules and disciplines to facilitate market integration by way of electronic commerce*”

# E- Government

- **CARICAD/UNDESA**
- **Ministerial Consultations on ICT and E-Government**
- **Website: E-government in the Caribbean ([www.unpan.org](http://www.unpan.org))**
- **E-government readiness methodology**
- **E-government readiness index /ranking of Caribbean countries**
- **Draft Caribbean Regional E- Government Strategy and Action Plan**

# E-Governance

- Video Conferencing between Member States
- Radio CARICOM
- Connectivity (E-Links America)

# E-Learning

- Caribbean Learning and Knowledge Network (CKLN) project:
  - Institutional Strengthening/Strategic Planning for Tertiary Education Institutions in the Caribbean
  - Learning Management system for the Development of Distance Education programs
  - Telecommunications Equipment to effect Connectivity to E-Links
- Joint Program Development between Universities in Italy and UWI, UG, Utech and other Tertiary Institutions in the Caribbean

# Roles/responsibilities for CARICOM institutions

- Identification of roles/responsibilities for CARICOM institutions –
  - Work completed by Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee (May 2003)
  - Accepted by Heads (July 2003)
  - ‘Mobilised’ by CARICOM Ministers of ICT (October 2004)

# CARICOM/UNDP/ Italy Project

1. Public Education and Strategic Partnership
2. CARICOM Secretariat capacity building
3. Information Repository/ Website for Decision support on ICT activities
4. E-Government / Governance
5. E-Learning
6. E-Commerce
7. Start Date: September 1, 2004
8. Estimated Budget: \$9M



# Role of Government

*"without innovative public policy, these technologies could become a source of exclusion, not a tool for progress"*

(UN Development Report, 2001)

- Provision of new ways of citizen to government engagement
- Investment & trade promotion
- Preservation of lucrative business areas
- Establishment of core principles for settlement systems to facilitate electronic signatures & payments
- Enabling environment re telecom, ICT access issues (liberalisation, software policy, domain names etc.)
- Champion the Connectivity agenda

# Consumer (citizen) Issues

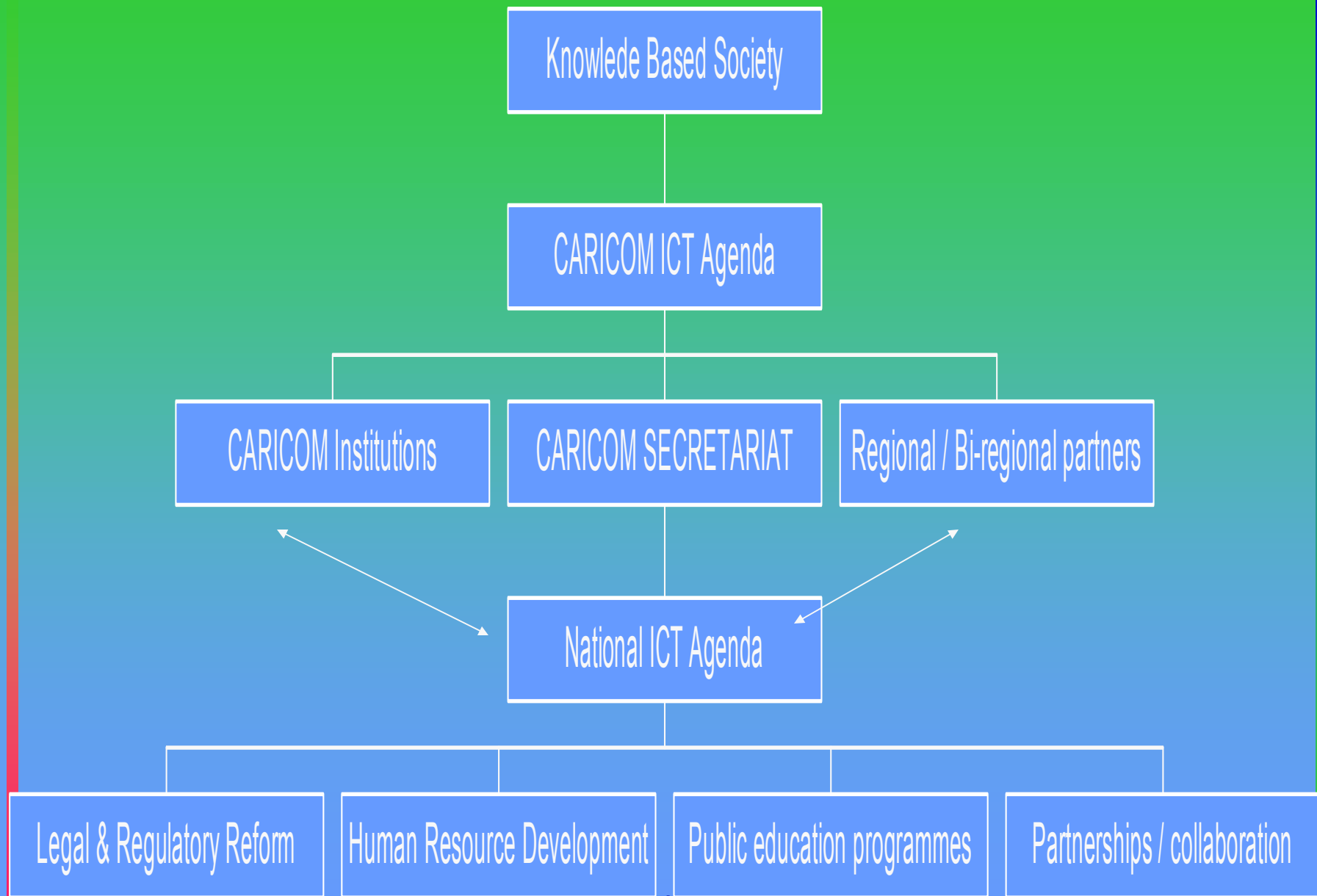
- Education of local consumers & suppliers
- Measures to safeguard consumer interests
- Involvement CROSQ
- E- Inclusion of persons with special needs

# National Approaches in CARICOM

- Formulation of ICT policies
- Legal & regulatory reform
- E-Readiness assessments
- Progressive liberalisation of telecommunication

# Key areas for regional effort

- **Affordable Access**
- Human Resource Development
- Trade issues of spectrum
- IPRs (content issues)
- Investment & Statistical Framework
- Dispute resolution
- Partnerships/collaboration
- Internet Management / Governance



# Challenges / Constraints

- IT optimists vs. IT pessimists
- Infrastructure – electricity, telephony, network connectivity
- Policy constraints
- Costs / Funding
- Capacity development
- Social exclusion
- Diminishing of cultural diversity

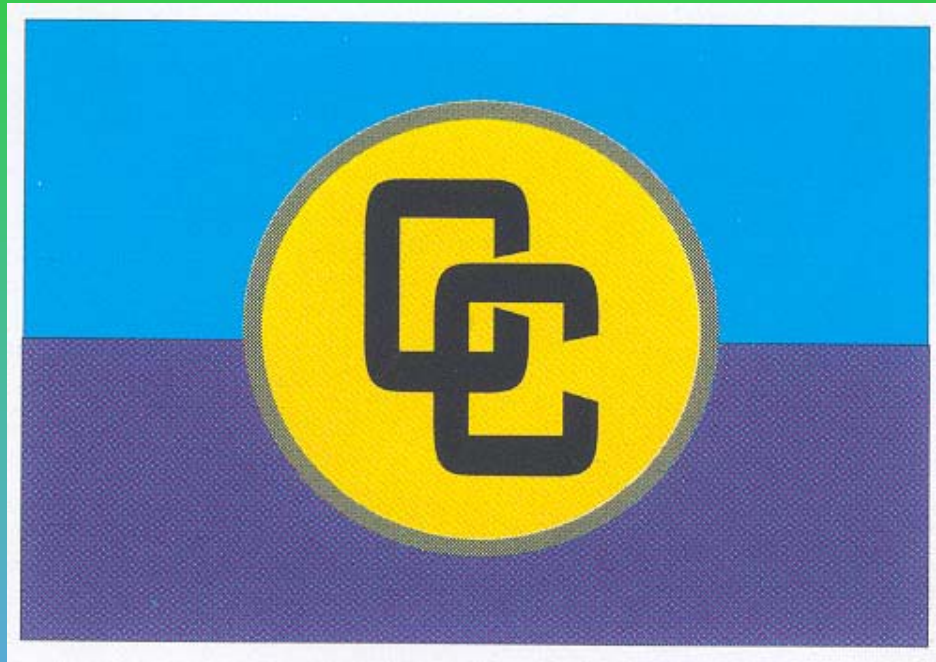
# Snapshot of the (CARICOM) future

- Creation a single, regional economic space and market -CSME
- ICTs integrated into the development Agenda
- Efficient Governments with Online Services
- Enhancement of the region's competitiveness & its participation in global economic activities
- Knowledge-based economy focused on extending Internet Connectivity to all CARICOM people
- Critical mass of highly skilled/trained citizens

# Next Steps

- Negotiations in the multi-lateral fora
- Clear Definition of a CARICOM Information Society
- Continued participation in International Arena
- Awareness raising/Best Practices/Info sharing
- Continued collaboration with Regional and Bi-regional partners to create the CARICOM Information Society
- Draft Plan of Action approved at ICT Ministers Meeting in October 2004 (Barbados)





**Thank You...**

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