



## PORT OF SPAIN COMMITMENT ON DIGITAL INTEGRATION

Caribbean Ministers with responsibility for Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Telecommunications and Digital Transformation met in the city of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on May 15 to 16, 2023 at the Executive Session on Digital Leadership in the Caribbean; which was convened by the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

**Meeting** with the aim of sharing their experiences, challenges and interests in leveraging digital technology for sustainable development in the context of their role as the senior policy makers, the Ministers underscored the importance of technology as a facilitative tool for securing sustainable development objectives for the benefit of all Caribbean people, based on the principles of trust, inclusion, transparency, accountability and responsiveness;

**Convinced** of the centrality of coordination and collaboration in unlocking the full potential of technology and in developing a shared vision adapted to the national reality and regional perspectives;

**Recognising** the need to address systematically, impediments to public sector innovation, at the regional, national and organisational level and the need for informed action;

**Considering** the importance of establishing a Single ICT Space to foster economic, social and cultural integration, comprised of regionally harmonised policies, regulations, standards and best practices, for the betterment of Caribbean citizens;

**Noting** that although the region is comprised primarily of small island developing states (SIDS), it is not homogenous, as countries are at different stages in their digital development, the Ministers therefore focused their discussions on three areas salient to digitalisation in the Caribbean:

- The Infrastructural Ecosystem;
- Cybersecurity; and
- Digital identity (e-ID) and Interoperability.

### I. INFRASTRUCTURAL ECOSYSTEM

In aligning with wider regional efforts in support of digital transformation and economic development, the Ministers acknowledged the need for standardisation of the use of technology, both in-country and across the Caribbean Region which would bolster the establishment of the CARICOM Single ICT Space. Further, they noted that a challenge for regional governments has been the safeguarding of citizens personal information and privacy. Recalling that the CARICOM Digital Agenda 2025, identifies the establishment of regional cloud infrastructure and the development of supporting regulations, underlying the creation of a robust digital architecture that can support economic growth, provide reliable access to digital services and solutions, for all, the Ministers agreed to:

1. **Consider the creation of a Regional Government Cloud** leveraging existing or planned government data centres across the Caribbean Region.
2. **Establish a Regional Data Centre** to provide a more cost-effective and resilient solution for data storage and management.

### II. CYBERSECURITY

The Caribbean Region has a number of inherent vulnerabilities, rendering it an attractive target for cybercriminals. With our countries experiencing various cyber threats and attacks resulting in consequences of varying severity for individuals, businesses, and governments, we recognize the need for joint and focused action. Having acknowledged the need for multisectoral approaches to cybersecurity with the involvement of decision-makers, at the highest level within governments, the private sector and civil society, and to provide a basis for a harmonised approach to cybersecurity while reducing cross border barriers, the Ministers agreed to:

1. **Develop a Regional C-SIRT** (Computer Security Incident Response Team) to coordinate collaboration among national CSIRTs, providing services such as incident remediation cooperation, cyber intelligence reporting, advisory services for national CSIRTs, public awareness and outreach on cyber threats, and establishing partnerships with key organizations.
2. **Enhance Cybersecurity Education, Training, and Awareness** to build capacity, to address the skills gap in the cybersecurity industry; and to promote safe online practices and educate citizens on the risks associated with cyber threats.
3. **Develop a Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Regional Framework** to protect critical infrastructure from cyber threats, identify vulnerabilities, and implementing appropriate risk mitigation measures.

### III. DIGITAL IDENTITY (E-ID) AND INTEROPERABILITY FRAMEWORK

While some Caribbean Governments have embarked on establishing national digital identities (e-IDs) and interoperability frameworks, there remains room for concerted action to overcome the significant challenges and inconvenience faced by individuals and businesses in accessing government services and in conducting business. This can result, *inter alia*, in increased distrust among citizens of governments and the systems established, greater inefficiencies and reduced effectiveness, which in turn, can deleteriously impact trade and economic competitiveness, individually and collectively.

Seeking to ensure that the economies of the Caribbean countries are integrated regionally, including in the sphere of e-commerce, and that there is need to create an enabling environment for the development and delivery of end-to-end regional e-services, the Ministers agreed to:

1. **Pursue cross-border recognition of digital IDs**, addressing issues such as data protection, and privacy.
2. **Establish a shared repository of digital solutions** (government-owned source code) allowing governments access to solutions required for their digital transformation efforts.
3. **Develop a region-wide validation of national forms of identification and credentials** based on an interoperable digital identity;

Ministers acknowledged the importance of education, information sharing and the raising of awareness on issues such as data protection, cybersecurity and the e-Identity systems to build trust and confidence among all stakeholders (citizens, business and civil society); and to highlight the benefits of transformative systems that can serve the interest of the people of the Caribbean Region.

The Ministers therefore committed to the pursuit of collaborative and collective efforts, with Governments, the Private Sector Civil Society and Academia working together in close partnership. In this regard, the Ministers emphasized the importance of sharing insights and lessons learnt from successes and challenges, in the use of digital technology not only for sustainable development, but as a critical enabler of Caribbean integration. Such efforts are intended to connect Caribbean citizens and the Diaspora, harnessing the Region's potential to create a Caribbean Digital Region and a distinct Caribbean brand that is recognised and respected globally.

The Ministers, in closing, extended their sincere thanks to the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, through the Ministry of Digital Transformation, and to the City of Port of Spain for their generous hospitality in convening the Executive Sessions on Digital Leadership in the Caribbean; and conveyed their gratitude to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) for their sterling support.

Agreed upon by Ministers with responsibility for ICT, Telecommunications and Digital Transformation in the Caribbean Region in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on May 16, 2023.

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Hon. Michel Chebat  
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**ST. VINCENT  
AND THE  
GRENADINES**

Hon. Curtis King  
2023-05-16 11:50:11



**GRENADA**

Hon. Lennox  
Andrews  
2023-05-16 11:50:28



**SURINAME**

Hon. Albert  
Jubithana  
2023-05-16 11:50:38



**ST. KITTS  
AND NEVIS**

Hon. Konris  
Maynard  
2023-05-16 11:51:10



**HAITI**

Mr. Donald Marcellin  
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**DOMINICA**

Hon. Chekira  
Lockhart-Hypolite  
2023-05-16 11:52:04



**TRINIDAD  
& TOBAGO**

Sen. the Hon Hassel  
Bacchus  
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**ANTIGUA  
AND BARBUDA**

Hon. Melford  
Nicholas  
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**BARBADOS**

Hon. Davidson  
Ishmael  
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**CURACAO**

Mr. Giovanni King  
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