

Caribbean Internet Governance Forum (CIGF) Celebrates 10 Years

The 10th edition of the Caribbean Internet Governance Forum (CIGF) was held at the Atlantis, Paradise Island Resort in The Bahamas from 6th to 8th August 2014. The CIGF is a regional, multi-stakeholder forum which was initiated by the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat in 2005 in order to coordinate a regional approach to Internet Governance issues for the final session of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis that year.

The CIGF has since been convened annually by the CTU and lays claim to being the first such regional forum in the world, all others having been convened after the initial global Internet Governance Forum in 2006. The primary product of the work of the CIGF has been the formulation of a Caribbean Internet Governance Policy Framework issued in 2009, and updated in 2013, which:

- Articulates a vision, mission and guiding principles for IG in the Caribbean
- Identifies current priority areas in IG of greatest relevance to the Caribbean
- Offers policy recommendations in such priority areas for the attention of all stakeholders.

The theme of the 10th CIGF was “Building National Capacity for Global Influence” and specific objectives addressed in the agenda were to:

- Build regional capacity in the area of ccTLD operation and administration
- Review and update the Caribbean Internet Governance Framework V 2.0
- Facilitate open discussion on the Net Mundial Outcomes, and the proposed NTIA transition.
- Explore and spread awareness on Opportunities for Caribbean Growth through the Internet Economy
- Develop a mechanism to ensure effective Caribbean representation at Global Internet Governance Fora.

There were over 40 registered participants representing Caribbean stakeholders in government, operating companies and other private sector, academia, civil society and, in particular, Caribbean ccTLDs for whom dedicated content had been included on the agenda. ICANN, ARIN, LACNIC, ISOC and Google all provided financial support as well as valuable agenda content. Agenda information as well as presentation slides are archived on the CTU’s event web page at <http://ctu.int/events/details/129-10th-caribbean-internet-governance-forum>.

The 10th CIGF successfully addressed its objectives through presentations and several vibrant discussion sessions and, when necessary, focussed review of the policy framework document. The ccTLD group identified specific areas of common interest and established mechanisms for further ongoing collaboration. The ccTLD administrator of the Commonwealth of Dominica announced the establishment of an anycast node in Dominica for the benefit of its ccTLD and offered its services to other regional operators.

In addition, suggested refinements to the policy framework were also identified for subsequent wider circulation and comment. This is the first step in the current revision cycle towards a third revision of the document for likely issuance in 2016.

Most importantly, the CTU Secretary General, Ms. Bernadette Lewis proposed an approach for fostering capacity building in IG at the national level in order to enhance Caribbean participation and influence globally in IG, consistent with the 2014 theme. This approach is based on mobilising relevant ICT resources and expertise in the Caribbean not currently focussed on IG e.g. computer societies, IT professional associations and the like.

The CTU will continue to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration in the Caribbean region on Internet issues and in particular through the medium of the CIGF. More deliberate efforts will also be taken in the near future to coordinate the work of the CIGF with the wider regional LACIGF and the global IGF. The 11th CIGF was announced to be held in Suriname at a date to be fixed in 2015.

About the CTU

The Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) is a regional organisation with responsibility for the development of ICT policy within the Caribbean region. Its members are drawn from Caribbean Governments, private sector and civil society organisations. It seeks to create an environment in partnership with members to optimize returns from ICT resources for the benefit of stakeholders. See <http://ctu.int>.