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STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Eden Charles

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on

Agenda Item 16 “Information and Communications Technologies”

In the

Second Committee

Tuesday 22nd October, 2013

United Nations Headquarters
Mr Chairman,

I speak on behalf of the fourteen (14) Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM associates itself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM wishes to express appreciation to the Secretary General for the preparation of the reports on this agenda item.

As a region comprising States characterised by small, vulnerable economies with a limited export base and contracting fiscal space, the transformative value of ICTs as a key enabler in support of our development efforts cannot be overemphasised. In fact, as a group of primarily island States, ICT is probably the single most important facilitator of our regional integration process, the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME):

Mr. Chairman,

For CARICOM, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), as well as its outcome documents and follow up processes, are critically important in facilitating global and regional cooperation toward the creation of a facilitative international and regional environment for the promotion and development of ICTs in developing countries.

In implementing WSIS outcomes, a number of CARICOM countries, including Trinidad and Tobago, have begun tailoring national development strategies to achieve sustainable and inclusive development through focusing on innovation and creativity. Our States have placed a continuing focus on mainstreaming ICT activities and developments to effectively contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those related to income poverty reduction, education, health, environment, and gender equity.

A key pillar in the achievement of these objectives is the CARICOM ICT4Development Programme which is now complemented by the recently adopted Regional Digital Development Strategy (RDDS). The RDDS outlines the level of ICT development in the region, identifies existing gaps including critical regional issues, such as broadband development, and proposes mitigating measures.

Mr. Chairman,

The global debate on Internet Governance has grown considerably as ICT and the Internet, although important tools for free expression, and foundation elements in the development of an information society, also have the capacity to be misused.

Internet public policy, including ICT governance, is an area in which governments of small States, such as those in the CARICOM region, have a critical role to play and must be actively engaged. Given the impact of ICT on the economic, social and cultural development aspirations of small States, we are of the firm view that international Internet governance
must be multilateral, transparent and democratic with the full involvement of governments and all relevant stakeholders. We note with some concern however, that to date, the “ICT governance” agenda is still being driven primarily by countries that have the resources and institutions that can more readily respond to ensuing challenges. We therefore welcome efforts to expand the participation of developing countries in the Internet Governance Forum but call for greater efforts to be made in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Given that the increasing use of technology is accompanied by real and potential threats, there is a need to develop the requisite capacity to mitigate the impact of cybercrime while building confidence in the use of the Internet. Additionally, owing to the fact that traditional geographic boundaries do not exist in cyber space, cyber security and cybercrime have to be addressed collaboratively at the national, regional and international level. CARICOM Member States participate in a number of initiatives in this area including:

- The ITU/EC joint project for “Enhancing Competitiveness in the Caribbean through the Harmonization of ICT Policies, Legislation and Regulatory Procedures” (HIPCAR) to elaborate the draft cybercrime legislation and support policy;
- The Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative: Capacity Building for critical national stakeholders including training of investigators, prosecutors and the Judiciary; and
- ITU/IMPACT: Assistance in establishing a Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT).

The Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) has also established the Caribbean Internet Governance Forum to enable discussion at the regional level and has prepared a Draft Caribbean Internet Governance Policy Framework which is currently under review by Member States.

Mr Chairman,

The expanded use and diffusion of computer technology and mobile telephony throughout the CARICOM sub-region demonstrates that some progress has been made in the development of the ICT sector and the region’s efforts to foster knowledge-based and innovative societies in an increasingly information, knowledge and technology-driven world. Nevertheless, several challenges continue to frustrate regional efforts to implement the outcomes of the WSIS; specifically, insufficient resources, shortages of skills and applications, fragmentation and lack of coordination.

We therefore call on the international community to enhance its support to CARICOM in the development of the ICT sector through the provision of additional resources, strengthened partnerships, increased technology transfer and capacity building that is tailored to meet the particular needs of our small societies. The role of the United Nations Development System and its funds, programmes and agencies in streamlining the issue of ICT into its development programming is also critical for these efforts.
Mr. Chairman,

We are now at a pivotal stage in global development planning in the light of the launch of processes to begin discussions on the post 2015 global development agenda. We agree with the views expressed in the SGs report on the progress made in the implementation and follow up to the WSIS outcomes at the national and regional levels, that the impact of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) on development will be an important theme within the post-2015 development agenda including for the introduction of sustainable development goals.

The transformative potential of ICT for development must be taken fully into account in the context of Post 2015 development agenda setting in order to assist developing countries in their national and regional efforts to harness the benefits and address the challenges posed by this particular sector.

It is broadly acknowledged that rapid advancements in ICT development have out paced the ability of policy-makers to integrate this sector effectively into over-arching national, regional and international development strategies. The upcoming ten year review Conference of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes to take place by 2015 (WSIS+10) is therefore of critical importance for assessing lessons learned and embarking on new global agreements to take into account technological advancements and the rapidly evolving ICT landscape. It would therefore be important for preparations for the Conference to begin at the earliest opportunity so that its preparatory process may feed into the discussions on the Post 2015 development agenda. We therefore welcome the forward-looking approach of the United Nations agencies and other stakeholders in already beginning the assessment of the achievements made in implementing WSIS outcomes ahead of the WSIS+10 Review.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM is of the view that the upcoming WSIS review should receive a high level of political commitment from all States given the likely far-reaching implications of its outcomes on the future of international cooperation in the field of information and communication technology for development. We assure you of our delegations' full support for achieving a successful outcome for that Conference.

I thank you.