

## ***Grenada Internet Exchange Point and DNS Root Server Ceremony***

Remarks by

Hon. Nazim Burke,

*Minister of Finance, Planning, Economy, Energy and Cooperatives*

At the

GRENADA INTERNET EXCHANGE POINT RE-LOCATION CEREMONY

NTRC Headquarters, Maurice Bishop Highway, Grand Anse, St. George's, Grenada

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On behalf of the Government of Grenada, I extend my sincere congratulations to the NTRC, LIME, Flow and the other parties responsible for the establishment of the first internet Exchange point in the English-speaking Caribbean and for the launch of a domestic Domain Name System Root server in Grenada.

Since 2009 the Caribbean Telecommunications Union and its strategic partner Packet Clearing House, have been working with the Government of Grenada on this initiative. In fact, it was at a CTU Ministerial Fora on Internet Exchange Points that my Government first heard about the inefficiencies of traditional routing of domestic Internet traffic and the benefits of having an IXP to the growth and security of the national Internet economy.

At that point we immediately determined that Grenada must have its own IXP. The NTRC was tasked to facilitate the process. At this stage I must applauded the diligence of Dr. Spencer Thomas, Mr. Aldwyn Ferguson and the NTRC team in managing the process.

Many consultations, meetings, and workshops later and over the course lengthy process shepherded by Mr. Ferguson, the Government's vision of having a local facility for the exchange of local Internet traffic has become a reality.

To the organisations that have joined together to make this happen, Lime and Flow, I thank you for setting aside the postures that typically go with a fiercely competitive market and collaborating maturely to make this IXP a reality. Your efforts have been an encouragement to Government and a model for corporation for the greater good of the national community, and indeed, for the region.

The notion of the establishment of an IXP has been ridiculed at many levels. I am very sure that we have heard all of the arguments against Caribbean IXPs: The Caribbean markets are too small; the domestic traffic is miniscule; there are no Caribbean content providers that would justify an IXP. These are the views that reveal a short sighted perception of our world, our Caribbean and our countries and a fundamental lack of vision for the future. The arguments sound very much like those put forward against liberalisation of Caribbean telecommunications sector ...and look at us now!

The Government has been hearing the laments of innovators and mobile application developers whose fledgling high bandwidth services are being stymied by the current routing challenges; the school seeking to provide multimedia content to students and businessmen who want 24/7 Internet-based video surveillance company all express their angst with bandwidth issues....

As more citizens go on line; as Governments move to e-government, schools to distance learning, traditional media go to e-publications and broadcasting and ICT based industries are spawned, **local content for domestic consumption will grow and the value of an Internet Exchange Point as critical internet infrastructure will be better understood.**

At this point we may not have a large market, or much content, or many users, but we are building for the future.

The Grenada IXP provides a tangible, practical pathway to technology-based innovation, access, and choice for the national community. This is a first step.

So to the naysayer who says that our markets are not mature enough to justify an IXP, I say “Do not despise this small beginning” – We must now take advantage of this platform to contribute to the building of the Grenada knowledge society.

To the partners in the IXP, you have fulfilled an obligation, but I trust that you will view it as a contribution towards development of our knowledge society. I particularly invite our friends at the Caribbean Telecommunications Union and Packet Clearing House to monitor and measure the performance of the IXP – provide us with the evidence of its relevance and guidance for its growth.

The Grenada IXP is now up and running, but the work is only now started, let’s continue building the Grenada Internet economy and giving our people the best possible opportunity to take their rightful place in the global Internet economy.

Thank You.