

ITU SIDS

It is necessary to continue to include telecommunications (or Information and Communication Technologies – ICTs) with Transport, since this sector continues to be very important for SIDS and it has the potential to bring significant assistance to the development of SIDS. As we get more involved in the information society the role of ICTs will become more significant. ICTs should be treated as a major cross-cutting issue and will be of importance in the diversification of the economies of SIDS, now suffering from the effects of global problems. This was recently stated by the CARICOM lead Prime Minister for ICTs, Hon. Tillman Thomas of Grenada.

Since the late 1990s we have witnessed the liberalization of the ICT sector and this has continued. We now see a proliferation of mobile telephones and connectivity where connectivity was previously not possible. This has helped to generate economic activities that were previously possible. Notwithstanding the effect of mobile phones, SIDS are not doing very well in respect of the introduction of broadband technologies which is crucial to the further development of SIDS and the harnessing of the potential of ICTs.

The UN's World Summit on the Information Society was convened over two Sessions ((2003 and 2005), led by the ITU. One of its objectives was to assist in the implementation of the MDGs. SIDS and MDGs are referred to in MDG No. 8 with respect to making available the benefits of new technologies. There are several goals to be achieved through the WSIS and the time period is similar to that of the MDGs - 2015.

The ITU and the European Commission are in the process of implementing a significant project in several countries, including SIDS, aimed at the harmonization of ICT policies, procedures and regulations. This is expected to assist in investment and the overall management of the ICT sector.

ICTs also play a very important role in climate change and disaster management. Regarding disaster management, this was obvious during the recent earthquake when the ITU and its partners provided significant assistance to Haiti and Chile, among others, through the provision of ICT equipment to assist in the recovery process.

The next step for SIDS will be to make sure that broadband facilities are introduced in their countries and that there is support for regulatory bodies to ensure the smooth functioning of the sector. Therefore broadband network development should be one of the key strategies. This will facilitate e-government, e-education and various other ICT applications.

However, SIDS should be prudent in their ICT development strategies. As networks increase and facilities increase, emphasis should also be placed on Cybersecurity matters. Cybercrimes are on the increase and all persons using the Internet should be protected. This is particularly true of our children who must be protected in cyberspace. In addition, this continued growth in ICT facilitates means that measures should be put into place for

the disposal of computer and cell phone equipment. Consequently suitable e-waste policies are required.