



Castries, September 1st th 2010: *“The ECTEL model of joint Regulatory Authority is the most sought after model, to the point where we can export our human capital, our talents and expertise to several other regions of the world, including Asia, the Pacific and Africa, to demonstrate and share the ECTEL experience”...*

This impression of the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) was stated by Prime Minister, The Hon Dr. Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

in his feature address at the award ceremony at Government House in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Awards Ceremony recognized the contribution of nationals of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the liberalization of the telecommunications sector and the establishment of ECTEL.

The Prime Minister noted that the achievements of ECTEL was the result of rigorous negotiations and unrelenting dedication and professionalism of leaders, technical staff and advisers some of whom were selected to be honoured by ECTEL through out the region.

Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, former Prime Minister Sir James Mitchell, Hon Jerrol Thompson, Minister of Telecommunications, Science, Technology and Industry, Mr. Isaac Solomon, Chairman of the ECTEL Board of Directors, Mr. Donnie Defrietas former Managing Director of ECTEL, Mr. Randolph Cato, Senior Director at the OECS Secretariat and Mr. Apollo Knights Secretary/Director of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) are the seven persons who were honored in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Member of the ECTEL Council of Ministers, Dr Jerrol Thompson who also spoke at the event called for the revision of the current legislation governing the telecommunication sector to be expanded in scope to embrace the ICT sector. ECTEL will hold similar ceremonies in St. Kitts

and Nevis in September and in Dominica in November. In addition to the awards ceremony, national and regional symposiums have been held in the Member States where issues such as the experience of service delivery, collaboration in regional regulation and the impact of ICT on young people have been discussed.



Speaking to the OECS News Link Appollo Kights said ECTEL's presence has significantly improved the accessibility of communications technology by households: ***"When we started the liberalization process in St. Vincent specifically, fifty percent of the households had a residential land liner. There were only a few thousand maybe two thousand mobile phones which mostly businesses had. But since that time we more or less have all households that have communication means which is mostly via mobile services... We have seen a large decrease in cost when communicating internationally, especially in countries like the UK and the USA."***

Kights says ECTEL and the NTRC in Kingstown continue to press for a further reduction in the cost of telecommunications service, particularly in the area of mobile phones: ***The cost of communication has not really reduced that much locally, especially for the mobile phones. So communicating is still substantially higher when compared to the fixed line service and it's something we have been working on over the last few years and have found some reduction over the last year but we think more could be done in that area."***

He says most of the seven awardees still contribute to the development of the Telecommunications sector regionally and internationally. The ceremony in St. Vincent was the third hosted by ECTEL and forms part of a year-long programme of activities and events to observe the tenth anniversary of the regional regulatory authority.

(SEE PHOTOS ATTACHED) L-R **Sir James Mitchell, Mr. Apollo Knights, Mr. Isaac Solomon, H.E. Sir Frederick Ballantyne, Hon Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Minister Jerrol Thompson, Mr Randolph Cato**

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