



## **10<sup>th</sup> ECTEL Anniversary Programme Launch**

### **Address by**

**Mr. Isaac Solomon – Chairman, ECTEL Board of Directors**

*February 25<sup>th</sup> 2010  
Bay Gardens Beach Resort,  
Castries, Saint Lucia*

I stand here before you filled with joy and a deep sense of pride and achievement to be associated with this organization – The Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority, ECTEL. Unlike many others who are only celebrating this milestone, I have had the privilege to celebrate all ECTEL's birthdays since its inception in 2000.

Coincidentally, I was the Chairman of the Board when ECTEL turned 5 years old and in my message on the fifth anniversary, I noted that it was extremely difficult to imagine what our territories would have been like in 2005 without the liberalization of the sector. In addition to being gracious and humbled by the opportunity provided to serve the region, I thanked God for the blessings bestowed upon us and the leaders of our Member States who had the vision

commitment and foresight to make ECTEL a reality. Again I reiterate this deep feeling of gratitude.

Ten years in the life of a regulator in such a dynamic sector must not be seen solely in the context of calendar years, but rather, the intensity of the engagement in regulating telecommunications and in particular managing the playing field of competing providers. Our statistics are telling – fifty regular meetings and over a dozen special meetings of the Board, close to thirty meetings of the Council of Ministers, over sixty individual licenses and many more class licenses granted. The impact of this regulators' work over the past decade is illustrated by, among other things, the growth of telecommunications revenues from an estimated EC\$611 million in 2004 to EC\$790 million in 2007 and mobile penetration levels from 2% in 2000 to over 100% in 2009 across all ECTEL Member States. At a more intimate level, many mothers and grandmothers in our region are in regular contact with their children within and outside the islands via email. The small crop producer does not leave home without his cell, with or without credit. Fisherfolk now have alternate means of communication while they are at sea and many budding entrepreneurs with no fixed place of doing business can be in contact with their clients.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the history of ECTEL is a work in progress and several chapters can be reviewed on our redesigned website: [www.ectel.int](http://www.ectel.int). There you will also find new information about our programme of celebration.

I wish however to share some of the information of the schedule of major events and activities for the observance of the tenth anniversary. Today's launching ceremony is an integral part of the celebration and the selection of

speakers is designed to help us start the introspection required to give us the platform for the future – the next ten years.

The other main activities are as follows:

1. May 3-5: A recommitment ceremony will be held in Grenada on May 4 during which time ECTEL will honour pioneers and workers of the regulatory system. During this period, the Board and Council will also hold regular meetings in Grenada. We will also provide the platform for service providers to share their experiences of liberalization and their expectations of the next decade.
2. June 1-3: A flag raising ceremony will be held in observance of the anniversary of the opening of the ECTEL Headquarters in Saint Lucia. A regional forum of regulators will also be held in Saint Lucia and a ceremony to recognize pioneers and workers of the NTRC and ECTEL. Other regulators from the region will join us in a forum on common issues. We anticipate that the CTU road show will also be held in Saint Lucia at that time.
3. July 28-29: A national ceremony will be held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in collaboration with the NTRC, to recognize pioneers and workers to coincide with the meeting of the Board of Directors.
4. In September ECTEL will again collaborate with NTRC and other government organizations to recognise the progress and work of the regulatory system. The Board of Directors will also meet for its Budget and Work Programme review.

5. November 16-18: The ceremony will be held in Dominica to recognize regulators. The members of the Board and Council will join in the celebrations following the meetings in Dominica during this time.

During the year, ECTEL will also launch a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary magazine, a video documentary and a two year Public awareness strategy. It is hoped that these major events will also stimulate other activities within the ECTEL Member States. The Directorate has continued to work with NTRCs and respective government agencies in the design and delivery of the programme.

On behalf of the Board, Directorate and Council, and the respective Commissions, I want to urge you all to participate in these activities where possible. Our invitation is an illustration of the deepest appreciation for the numerous leaders and followers known and unknown who had the vision to support the efforts towards liberalisation which started with the World Bank telecommunications reform project in 1997. The names are too many to mention.

In closing I extend sincere thanks to the Government and people of Saint Lucia for hosting ECTEL, Prime Ministers for their support, to all Council Members, past and present; to past and present Commissioners and staff of NTRC, and past and present staff of the Directorate.

I thank You.