

The Virgin Islands Consortium

BVI Communications Minister Calls For Better Internet Services; Jamaican Minister Wants Roaming Abolished

Caribbean / **Published On September 30, 2015 07:58 PM /**

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TORTOLA -- Communications Minister in the BVI Mark Vanterpool says he will not rest until this territory gets the best in internet services.

The BVI is currently hosting the Caribbean Telecommunications Unions (CTU) a regional conference on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Minister Vanterpool told the conference that the size of a country and its population, is irrelevant, in terms of being on the cutting edge of technology and indeed, the BVI intends to keep pace, with the rapid advancement, in the delivery of goods and services, through technology.

He said as Minister with responsibility for ICT, I want to assure everyone, that our telecommunications regulatory agency, the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), is putting the mechanism in place, to enable the launch of real broadband in the Virgin Islands, using "all mediums available".

"For the technologically savvy among us, this means, we will soon be able to have download speeds in excess of 20 megabits per second, which is more than 5-10 times of what currently exists, and my expectations are, that we would have speeds of up to 50 megs, in the very near future", he said.

The Communications Minister said he strongly believes that consumers should not have to pay prohibitive prices for this, because the technology already exists and is in use elsewhere in the world and as a government they are encouraging all of the operators to ensure that consumers, large and small, can benefit from real broadband service, very shortly.

Meanwhile Jamaica's Technology Minister Phillip Paulwell said they as a body have to deal with them by looking at how they are going to harmonize the regulatory systems, issues that affect ICTs from time to time, "We have to address it in a common way, we have to make sure roaming is finally abolished in the Caribbean."

According to Mr Paulwell, it is now for all Ministers to recognize the value of ICTs as a cross cutting facility that will enable the economy to grow, lives to be better, people to be employed.

"We regard it as such an important infrastructure accessibility that we need to ensure that the entire CARICOM through the heads do have a full presentation on the work that we have been doing and the mandate to go forward."