

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**fastforward achievements 2008**

***Connecting Trinidad & Tobago through ICTs***

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The National ICT Vision of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago:

*“Trinidad and Tobago is in a prominent position in the global information society through real and lasting improvements in social, economic and cultural development caused by the deployment and usage of information and communications technology”*

Over the past five years, Trinidad & Tobago’s Government has been actively pursuing what can be described as a “connectivity agenda” under the **fastforward** umbrella. Connectivity was identified as a key first stage in the development of its national e-Readiness. To date, there have been several noteworthy achievements which ultimately support this country’s **VISION 2020** National Developmental Plan.

***Liberalised Telecommunications Sector***

Efforts to liberalize the domestic telecommunications market have led to country-wide mobile coverage in excess of 90% and mobile penetration of 126%; the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the world according to the World Economic Forum’s Global Information Technology Report for 2007-2008. Surveys over the past two (2) years indicate strong increases in household Internet usage and overall internet penetration as broadband prices in Trinidad and Tobago are currently the lowest in the Caribbean.

***Effective Government***

A robust, high speed Communications Backbone, **GovNeTT**, currently connects 80% of Government Ministries, providing a secure platform for inter-agency collaboration and integration. This Network was featured in the 2005 compendium of innovative e-Government practices compiled by the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UNDESA). **GovNeTT**’s imminent enhancements include the availability of VoIP, video-conferencing and data centre services.

Consistent with broader public sector reform efforts, the Government has been successfully introducing alternative channels of service delivery as a means of becoming more customer-focused, while at the same time increasing its transparency, accessibility, availability, efficiency and effectiveness. Under the national **ttconnect** initiative, citizens can currently access Government through the Internet (**ttconnect Online**); common counters (**ttconnect Service Centre**); and automated kiosks (**ttconnect Self Serve**). While Government continues to augment the service offerings of these channels, it is also extending the **ttconnect** framework to include mobile (**ttconnect On The Go**) and contact centre (**ttconnect Hotline**) channels.

As a point of note, **ttconnect online** ([www.ttconnect.gov.tt](http://www.ttconnect.gov.tt)) was released to the public in 2007 and currently provides online access to information on over four hundred (400)

Government services and related resources; the first of this magnitude in the English-speaking Caribbean.

### ***A Vibrant e-Marketplace***

In recognition of the need for greater collaboration between the public and private sectors in implementing ***fastforward***, Government established the e-Business Roundtable in 2006. Comprising a mix of senior Government officials, high-level business executives, technology experts and academics, the Roundtable acts as a “think tank” for Trinidad and Tobago’s economic growth and success by focusing on leadership, opportunity recognition, innovation and revenue generation through the use of ICTs in business. In November 2008, in partnership with the e-Business Roundtable, the Government hosted Trinidad & Tobago’s first International ICT Business and Innovation Symposium, the theme of which was “**ICT: A Driver of National Transformation**”; a resounding success by most accounts.

**EnterpriseNeTT**, an online Business-to-Business (B2B) Marketplace focusing on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) was released as a pilot in 2007. As a companion to efforts aimed at encouraging ICT adoption among MSMEs, **EnterpriseNeTT** will soon benefit from the availability of national e-payment infrastructure that will support transactions between businesses as well as Business-to-Consumer (B2C) interactions

### ***The Digital Divide***

In addition to the emergence of a competitive telecommunications environment, efforts to bridge Trinidad & Tobago’s “digital divide” are further evidenced through the availability of Community Access Centres designed to provide access to the Internet and training in basic ICT literacy. A National Computer Refurbishment Programme is being designed in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat; noting the potential for replication elsewhere in the Caribbean region and also in other Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

### ***Moving Forward***

Given the strides in Trinidad and Tobago’s connectivity efforts, Government has turned its focus to increasing the usage and uptake in ICTs among the citizenry. Under ***fastforward II***, the updated National ICT Agenda seeks to leverage this connectivity in a way that improves the quality of life of all citizens of Trinidad & Tobago and positions the country in a more prominent position in the global information society.

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