

Carib Broadcast Regulators meet in Kingston in June

KINGSTON(JIS):

Thursday, May 20, 2010

Caribbean regulators, policy specialists and professionals in the Broadcasting, Telecommunications and wider ICT community will meet June 7 - 8, at the Terra Nova Hotel, Kingston, to discuss the future of broadcasting in the Caribbean.

The disclosure was made by Chairman of the Broadcasting Commission, Dr. Hopeton Dunn, Wednesday (May 19) at the Online Press Launch of the Commission's Regional Regulators' Forum on Policy and Regulation in the Electronic Media.

"A lot is happening in the Caribbean broadcasting and technology related landscape, and we are all about to make decisions about what will be the future of the broadcasting technology that we use in the Caribbean," Dr. Dunn said.



Chairman of the Broadcasting Commission, Dr. Hopeton Dunn, responding to a question during the Online Press Launch of the Commission's Regional Regulators' Forum on Policy and Regulation in the Electronic Media Wednesday (May 19). To his left, Executive Director, Cordell Green, monitors feedback from web participants. The forum which will be hosted at the Terra Nova Hotel in Kingston from June 7-8, 2010 and will focus on issues affecting the Broadcasting, Telecommunications ICT sectors.



From left to right Chairman of the Broadcasting Commission, Dr. Hopeton Dunn, Executive Director, Cordell Green, and Assistant Executive Director, Karlene Salmon-Johnson pictured at the launch of the Commission's Regional Regulators' Forum on Policy and Regulation in the Electronic Media Wednesday (May 19). The forum which will be hosted at the Terra Nova Hotel in Kingston from June 7-8, 2010 and will focus on issues affecting the Broadcasting, Telecommunications ICT sectors.

"It was felt by the Commission that we should help the Caribbean arrive at a consensus on critical issues, such as the technical standards and timetable for the Digital Switchover", Dr. Dunn explained.

Among the issues to be discussed are: the harmonisation of broadcasting and regulatory policies, including content standards across the Caribbean media landscape; and the impact of technological convergence on the broadcasting and related industries, including the challenges posed to regulation of the converging sector.

Another priority issue is the Digital Switchover, which the Chairman stated would provide an excellent opportunity to utilize the country's bandwidth for social and economic development.

"The switchover from analogue to digital is likely to free up quite a bit of spectrum space, as we move into the digital area. It will provide us with an opportunity to be more dynamic in how we deliver content, and also impact on the quality of content," he stated.

He suggested that, even more critical, will be how the digital dividend is managed, and the extra space and opportunities [mobile, broadband and third generation services] that are generated by virtue of switching to digital.

Several other issues will be discussed in four major roundtables. These are, "Media Policy for the Digital Age", "The Digital Communications Market: Challenges and Opportunities", "The future of Broadband and Digital Platforms" and "Media Content Standards".

On the second day of the forum, regulators will meet in a dedicated closed session to discuss strengthening content regulation, coordinating the Digital Switchover and building a regional regulators' forum.

While the physical participation in the event will be limited, all roundtable sessions will be streamed live online for participation of a wider audience, within and outside Jamaica.

Meanwhile, Steering Committee member and Broadcasting Commissioner, Dr. Elaine Wallace, who also spoke at the launch, highlighted the major role played by the licencees in the planning of the forum.

She said that some of the issues that are going to be addressed were placed on the programme because of the input of the licencees, who have been involved in the planning.

"The planning committee had representations from over-the-air broadcasters, the Media Association of Jamaica (Chairman, Gary Allen) and subscriber television. We have crafted a programme for the forum which involves licencees and which reflects matters in which licencees have a definite interest", she told JIS News.

The Broadcasting Commission is the region's oldest Broadcasting regulator, and has successfully engaged, over the last few years, in leading the transformation of on-air content, especially in music, from inappropriate to more acceptable daily output.

Persons interested in viewing the online launch can do so at www.broadcastingcommission.org/streamer.php .