

June 19, 2009

The Editor
Gleaner Company Limited
7 North Street
Kingston

Dear Sirs:

Re: Gleaner Editorial of June 19, 2009: “Does Mr. Green want to be Big Brother”

In its editorial on Friday, June 19, 2009, the Gleaner referred to recent comments made by me before Parliament’s Appropriations Committee. The thrust of the editorial was that the comments require clarification of the Commission’s position regarding the regulation of content on the Internet.

I can say unequivocally that the Commission does not contemplate regulating the Internet and is not engaged in any submissions for the requisite powers to do so.

As I stated at the Appropriations Committee meeting, self-regulation and individual empowerment are essential pillars of the approach to regulation in the Information Age with media literacy being a critical component.

The Member of Parliament, Ronald Thwaites, raised a concern about the harmful effect of some of the content to which our children are being exposed in the media. He requested that the Committee be told how the Commission intended to help with the problem. They were told about the introduction of addressable systems for cable TV which put subscribers in a position to block unwanted channels and therefore place on them the key responsibility for controlling what comes into homes by way of subscription arrangements.

The Appropriations Committee was also informed that content which is harmful to children can be accessed not only on cable and traditional media but also through Internet sites such as YouTube. It is in this context that remarks were made about the need for further study and continuous assessment of the status of the media landscape in Jamaica, including the impact of global developments in New Media.

The Committee was advised of a research programme which is being led by the Broadcasting Commission to identify where we are in the process of integrating traditional and new media. This will provide an evidence-based roadmap, using established best practices that should guide the policy and regulatory framework going forward.

The framework must take account of challenges posed by the Internet in the areas of Privacy, Cyber Security, Children’s Safety and Well-Being, Intellectual Property Rights, and Digital Rights Management. My comments were therefore not intended to convey

any contemplation by the Commission that broadcast content regulatory activities should extend to the Internet, even as we take account of how such new media impact vulnerable groups and the traditional sectors.

I would be grateful if this clarification is published at your earliest opportunity so that the position of the Commission can be clarified.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cordel Green', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Cordel Green
Executive Director