

# Caribbean Internet Forum 2008

## Keynote Speech: Professor William Melody

### *Shaping Next Generation Networks: the Intersection of Technologies, Markets and Policies*

We are now on the threshold of a new wave of expansion of the Internet to establish “Next Generation Networks”. Key elements in this expansion are,

- 1) a major extension of mobility as an integral part of broadband networks,
- 2) a dramatic increase in the volume and diversity of Internet communication as the Internet of Things (i.e., communicating devices) becomes an area for exponential growth; and
- 3) increasing applications of “cloud computing” in Internet utilities, which will allow individuals and small users simplified access to sophisticated services and applications, as well as improving the efficiency of their provision.

The priorities and pace of implementation of these new opportunities will be determined by developments at the intersection of technologies, markets and policies. Together they will shape the development of the Next Generation Networks over the next decade. Professor Melody discusses some of the key issues that will influence this development. In particular, he emphasizes the importance of strong policy and regulation to ensure full participation by all players and users, and the importance of developing the human capital, i.e., the skill base, needed to exploit the opportunities.

Although NGN development opportunities will be affected in fundamental ways by the current global financial crisis, they are not all negative. There will be less emphasis on new innovation, but there will be more emphasis on diffusion of services and applications. This will have beneficial effects for developing countries and for expanding network access within and between developing countries. They are also likely to benefit from a more intensive focus on efficiency of global operations by large companies, as well as a more intensive pursuit of bottom-of-the pyramid markets. Developing countries will want to examine their telecom and Internet policies to ensure they facilitate the vigorous pursuit of these opportunities.

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