



**STATEMENT BY MR. VANCE LEWIS**  
**CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY**  
**COMMISSION**  
**DURING THE LAUNCH CEREMONY OF THE TRC'S PUBLIC AWARENESS &**  
**EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON MONDAY 17TH MAY 2021**  
**AT MARIA'S BY THE SEA**  
**ROAD TOWN, TORTOLA**



Good morning to everyone.

Hon. Premier, even though Protocol has been established, let me recognize you as you have been very supportive of the Commission and its work, and also your able Permanent Secretary, Dr. Caroline O'Neal-Morton, who has also been very supportive of the Commission and its work since I've been Chairman just over a year. And also Dr. Arlene T. Penn in her capacity as Director of Communications.

Today, May 17<sup>th</sup> is World Telecommunication Day and also Information Society Day (WTISD) with the theme this year "***Accelerating Digital Transformation In Challenging Times***". World Telecommunications Information Society Day has been celebrated annually every 17 May since 1969 to mark the founding of the ITU, that's the International Telecommunications Union and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865.

The COVID-19 crisis has not only highlighted the critical role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for renewed function of societies but has also brought to the forefront the challenges it also faces in the industry to keep people connected in all environments. Globally it has also highlighted the inequities across the world for countries with differing digital capabilities. At the same time, the COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the

urgency of accelerating digital transformation and advancing the goals and targets of the Connect 2030 Agenda, which is to leave no one behind.

As Chairman of the Commission, I bring to the table over 40 years of experience in telecommunications from network/telecommunications to business management, to policy development. My telecoms experience has also taken me to the United Kingdom, to South America, and to the Caribbean, many countries of the Caribbean for training and operations before coming into the Commission on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020.

The Current Board of the Commission comprises three additional business persons with varied backgrounds in Banking, the Petroleum Industry and Consumer Electronics, in addition to the CEO, who himself brings a wealth of experience into regulating the industry. We were appointed just over one year ago by Premier Fahie for terms of 2 years in some instances and 3 years in others. Last year upon our appointment, we developed a common theme for the Commission, the Theme being, **ONE TEAM ONE GOAL** and that has been our rallying cry since then. We tried to achieve the Commission's Vision and Mission even as they are currently in transition as we review our Strategic Plan.

Just a word of mention about the Commission's staff, I am really so proud of the staff of the Commission and their dedication to the objectives and to the consumers of the territory. For instance, we are currently engaged in various affairs of strengthening our Human Resources capabilities and licensing the operators. Would you believe that even before the Board had formally acted to form Committees, the Commission's staff had started their work, which makes it really easy.

From a public relations point of view, I have heard expressions in the Community that people are not sure what the Commission does. There is growing frustration with the quality of services offered by the Operators of the telecommunications industry.

I am pleased to be able to provide a quick summary of some of the work done over the past year. I believe that we are accountable to the general public and hence this week will prove an excellent opportunity for the CEO, myself and other staff to update the general public.

I will give you just some of the goals that we have been working on in the Commission over the past year. Number one, and these are in no order of priority.

- Establishing Quality of Service standards - we have carried out studies of some of the best practices in telecommunications within the region and indeed across the world and will soon be able to establish some of these practices in the industry throughout the territory.
- We have taken a hard look at the service offered across our sister islands and realised that perhaps due to the terrain and other factors, the service is not uniform with many dropped mobile calls, non-standard data download experiences as we travel from sister island to sister island. These services should become standardized through some sort of Universal Service Mechanism.
- Also, we have developed a Spectrum Management Framework which is guiding the allocation of spectrum for all carriers for services using 3G, 3.75G, 4G and even up to 5G. As a matter-of-fact, we are looking forward to bringing forward spectrum award for 5G since a lot of the 5G devices are already coming to the market.
- We are also looking at ourselves, looking at the internal compliance aspects of the Commission and also the external aspects of whether the Operators are in compliance

with their licenses. This will inform the re-licensing process for operators and also the decision making into whether additional licenses in the sector are required.

These are just some of the things the Commission is engaged in to ensure that consumers get better value for money and have better throughput for data and Internet services. As Regulators we also ensure a level playing field in the industry by the principle of fairness to all operators and to our consumers. We also regulate the broadcasting Industry and in these days of the Global Pandemic we must ensure that broadcasters act responsibly in disseminating information to the general public.

Finally, in an effort to better serve the public we have just developed a new TRC website, which will go live today in commemoration of World Telecommunications Day. This site will be more friendly and will allow the public for instance, to engage the Commission and place complaints more formally and give us ideas which they may have. This in my mind will enhance our public image and give the public more confidence in the work we do.

We believe that it is vital that the community engage with the Commission and for persons to become engaged with telecommunications and technology in general.

I thank you.