

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

**UNVEILING CEREMONY OF
WOODFORD SQUARE
INTREPRETATIVE SIGNAGE**

FEATURE ADDRESS

**THE HONOURABLE RUPERT T. GRIFFITH
MINISTER OF TOURISM**

Date: Wednesday October 20, 2010

Venue: Woodford Square

Time: 10.00am

- His Worship Louis Lee Sing, the Mayor of Port of Spain
 - Mrs. Micheline Nunes-Mitchell, who is representing today the Honourable Chandresh Sharma, the Minister of Local Government
 - Mrs. Winifred David, Chief Executive Officer of the Port of Spain City Corporation and other senior city officials
 - Mr. Gregory Aboud, President of the Downtown Owners and Merchants' Association
 - Ms. Valerie Charles, Vice President Corporate Services, Tourism Development Company (TDC)
 - Other Invited Guests
 - Media Representatives
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I am really delighted to be here today to unveil new interpretative signage in the very special setting of Woodford Square, the People's Parliament.

Today's ceremony marks the long awaited culmination of the upgrade of historical signage at Woodford Square. The end result is a series of signage boards that provide historical facts on one of our most outstanding tourist attractions as well as an improved People's Blackboard for listing the day's discussion as well as other important information.

Situated in the heart of our capital city, Woodford Square takes pride of place as a gateway and meeting place for many varied interests.

As we look to the extraordinary landmark buildings on one side of this historic site - and to the busy shopping center on the other side - and as we also look back upon the rich history of the ground on which we stand - we realise just how privileged we are to be part of this place - and part of its revitalisation.

Partnering with the Port of Spain City Corporation, our aim for this Woodford Square project was to create a new appreciation of our historical heritage as well as to provide information to our discerning visitors as well as local populace.

The Ministry of Tourism spearheaded this signage initiative and took responsibility for the design, production and installation of the signboards whilst the City Council supplied the necessary support in planning the project, and bringing it to its successful fruition today.

The four (4) signboards provide factual information on the history of Woodford Square as well as a Visitor Map which highlights places of interest within the city center.

We owe renowned local historian, Michael Anthony, a debt of gratitude for providing the data for the information boards.

This signage project, simple as it is, exemplifies a much larger strategy. Our goal is not merely to design and build attractive interpretative signage that would build awareness, but more importantly to partner with state agencies and other stakeholders in taking tourism to new heights.

This project is a good example of how co-operation between the regional corporations, other ministries and the tourism industry can redound to everyone's benefit when there is a common purpose and the sharing of expertise.

Our decision to plant a few sturdy, hardy and vibrant flowering trees, this morning, within Woodford Square continues the legacy of a green space within the capital city. We recognise that whilst "hard" infrastructural improvements must be made at our tourist sites and attractions within the city, emphasis also must be paid to the conservation and beautification of our environment.

We will continue to enhance our public spaces by transforming them into more pleasant and vibrant areas for the community, residents and international visitors to enjoy.

Indeed the Ministry of Tourism has done quite a number of these landmark community enhancing projects such as the Interpretive Signage Project along the Toco Sangre Grande region designating the area as a “Turtle Village”, the upgrade of the Visitor Beach Facility at Salybia in Matura, the upgrade of the Visitor Centre in Grande Riviere and the enhancement of the Indo-Caribbean Museum in Carapichaima.

Indeed plans are already afoot to place an interpretative signboard on the Treasury Building which was the scene for the Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation in August 1834.

The TDC, also, will be working alongside the Port of Spain City Council and corporate Trinidad and Tobago to develop a range of tourist amenities around Port of Spain.

I would like to express my thanks and congratulations to the Port of Spain City Council and the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Housing and the Environment who have been intimately involved in ensuring the success of this particular signage project.

We are deeply indebted to you all for your commitment and collaboration in seeing the project through.

We are also confident that the Port of Spain City Corporation will ensure the proper upkeep and maintenance of these interpretative signboards.

I, in turn, would like to assure you that the Ministry of Tourism will try as much as possible to be supportive and creative in responding to the needs of communities. Indeed we will continue to support all efforts to make Port of Spain a clean green city; a capital city of which we will all be proud.

I urge all citizens to maintain Woodford Square ... keep it clean. This is our green oasis within the heart of the city. A place of relaxation, shelter, debate and truly a legacy that must be preserved.

It is our collective responsibility to build a livable and sustainable city that will enhance the well-being of people. After all, this is the place which we all call home.

I thank you.

October 19, 2010