

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

**INSTALLATION OF TWO DIRECTORS
ON THE BOARD OF THE TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**

FEATURE ADDRESS

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RUPERT GRIFFITH
MINISTER OF TOURISM
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Date: Wednesday August 17, 2011
Venue: Hyatt Regency Trinidad
Time: 6.00pm

- His Excellency Malay Misra, the India High Commissioner
- Mrs. Melba Dedier, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. George Stanley Beard and other Directors of the in-coming Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC) Board
- Brian Charles Lara, Sports Ambassador and international cricket icon
- The new Directors of the TDC Board – Mrs. Giselle Laronde-West and Dr. Annmarie Phillip-Hosein. Welcome.
- Representatives of the various Tourism Associations
- Our Partners in the Media Sector
- Friends

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

We are gathered here this evening to install two (2) new Directors to the Board of the marketing and implementation agency - the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC).

In November last year we started the process of changing the way we do tourism business. We appointed a new Tourism Board. Today, we are continuing that transformation. The industry is demanding a different mindset and strategy.

I congratulate the two (2) new Directors of the TDC Board - Mrs Giselle Laronde-West and Dr. Annmarie Phillip-Hosein.

I charge you and also the other members of the TDC board to be fair but firm in your decision making.

If you do your work diligently, we will surely witness a definite positive turnaround in terms of the level of awareness of Brand T&T and an increase in international arrivals.

In establishing the TDC board, I was not unaware of the challenges and constraints regarding adequate funding and corporate culture. I was, however, determined to facilitate and strengthen the board to be able to execute its mandate efficiently and effectively.

These new TDC Board appointees bring a wealth of tourism and general business experience which will provide a value added commercial and cultural leadership to the industry.

They have the dynamism, experience and know-how to help develop and market Trinidad and Tobago's tourism product and improve the local tourism sector.

But more importantly, Giselle and Annmarie are passionate about building Trinidad and Tobago.

These are individuals who have contributed significantly to the economic and cultural wealth of this country.

A former Ms. World, Holder of the Humming Bird Medal and an Ambassador for Trinidad and Tobago, Mrs. Giselle La Ronde-West has had over fifteen (15) years experience in the communications and event management fields.

A Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and a noted specialist in agro-tourism and animal science, Dr. Ann Marie Phillip Hosein has been at the forefront of changes in the agriculture sector.

I trust that you will accept your appointment as a welcome challenge and a unique opportunity to give back to Trinidad and Tobago.

It is critical that this new TDC Board not shirk from its mandate, which is, to develop the tourism sector in a sustainable and responsible manner and deliver on the promise of this Government to encourage recovery, regain jobs and promote sustainable economic development.

Often times Trinidad and Tobago has been acknowledged as the best kept secret in the Caribbean. This is in spite of the fact that this country offers a wide variety of tourist attractions.

The priority for the TDC Board is to change that perception.

Trinidad and Tobago must become the destination of choice in the Caribbean through aggressive marketing, well-conceptualised branding strategies and creative product packaging.

This process has indeed already began as we will be announcing, in a mere few weeks, the appointment of six (6) new International Marketing Representatives that will handle our

overseas marketing operations in our traditional tourism source markets as well as in the new markets that we will be targeting.

Within one year period in government, we have put in place a new National Tourism Policy. This tourism policy reinforces the sustainable competitiveness of our tourism industry and is fully compatible with Government philosophy of building a sustainable economy that will generate prosperity for all as well as the empowerment of our communities.

We have completed the draft of our One Year National Tourism Sector Action Plan. Our focus in the next coming months is the formulation of a comprehensive five (5) year Strategic Plan for the Tourism Industry.

I have also re-structured TDC. The TDC is now re-shaped and strengthened so as to be better able to implement tourism policy.

I have established separate departments to focus on our individual tourism niches - such as sports, heritage tourism - so as to further drive their development.

We have also moved the large cadre of employees within the TDC who have been working on a month to month basis to a contractual basis. This has definitely improved employee morale and commitment to the company's strategic goals and focus.

Once again, I encourage the TDC Board to strengthen its public private relationships and work hand in hand with our stakeholders.

Moreover the Tourism Development Company must work extremely closely with the Department of Tourism of the Tobago House of Assembly to support that Department in the execution of its strategies for Tobago's tourism sector.

Tobago has a different product to that of Trinidad; its tourism focus being for the traveller seeking respite in the serenity of its beaches and rainforests and simple lifestyle.

This Government is committed to re-positioning tourism as a truly strategic sector for economic growth and an engine for diversification.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen, I look forward with great anticipation to continue working with the Board of the TDC on important initiatives so

that Trinidad and Tobago can grow and prosper with a sustainable tourism strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the task for the TDC board is enormous but I have confidence and trust that members will rise to the occasion.

More so, when I know that every one of you has come on board with a store of knowledge and tested integrity, I am confident that we have the right board, management and staff in place to make Trinidad and Tobago shine.

I congratulate Mrs. Giselle Laronde-West and Dr. Annmarie Phillip-Hosein on their appointment to the Board of the Tourism Development Company Limited and wish them all success in this new initiative.

May God continue to bless each and every one of you.

August 17, 2011