

**MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
TURTLE VILLAGE TRUST**

**GREETINGS**

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

**Date:** Wednesday December 07, 2011  
**Venue:** Lobby of BHP Billiton, Movietown  
**Time:** 5.30pm

- Mr. Vincent Perreira, President of BHP Billiton
  - Mrs. Melba Dedier, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Tourism
  - Dr. Carla Noel Mendez, Director External Communications and Community Affairs of BHP Billiton
  - Reverend Sheldon Narine, Communications and Community Affairs Advisor BHP Billiton and Chairman of Turtle Village Trust
  - Dr. Allan Bachan, Executive Director of the Turtle Village Trust and Members of the Turtle Village Trust Board
  - Presidents of the various turtle conservation and ecotourism groups
  - Tourism Stakeholders
  - Representatives from the Ministries of Finance and Planning and Development
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What we are celebrating here this evening is a very powerful partnership that has evolved among selected communities, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, BHP Billiton Trinidad and Tobago and the private sector, to champion the cause of turtle conservation and sustainable ecotourism development.

This partnership is that of Turtle Village Trust; through the auspices of a team of men and women who are working tirelessly and giving of themselves voluntarily to preserve the endangered leatherback and other species of turtles and uplift the quality of life within communities using the vehicle of tourism.

I must also commend the Trust on its resolve to position Trinidad and Tobago as the premier turtle tourism destination globally and in turn build the tourism industry in Trinidad and Tobago.

Indeed, the Ministry of Tourism has been a proud supporter of Turtle Village Trust since its very inception. In this regard the Ministry has partnered with the Trust and funded many of its projects.

These include the construction of a Visitor Orientation Centre at Gran Riviere and a Craft Centre at Toco, interpretative and welcome signage along the pristine North East Coast, establishment of washroom facilities on the Toco Beach as well as skills and capacity training to a wide range of communities in that region.

In the first quarter of 2012 we will be opening the Valencia Visitor and Eco-Tourism Centre, which I understand has been dubbed the **GATEWAY TO NATURE**, and which will provide an excellent rest

stop for visitors entering North East and South East Trinidad.

As the Trust celebrates its fifth anniversary today I salute all its members for their hard work, selfless dedication and service to Trinidad and Tobago. The Trust has demonstrated form leadership, excellent stewardship, and a strong commitment to community empowerment and engagement.

Last but by no means least; I must applaud the sterling and on-going contribution of BHP Billiton to the upliftment of the social and economic fabric of communities within Trinidad and Tobago.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me assure you that the Ministry of Tourism will continue to support and partner with Turtle Village Trust in their future initiatives.

May I now wish everyone a Christ-Filled Christmas  
and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.

December 07, 2011