



**Address**

**by**

**Senator the Honourable Randall Mitchell**

**Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts**

**at the**

**Launch of Destination Trinidad Website**

**on**

**Monday 30 November 2020**

**At**

**Port of Spain Ballroom, Hilton**

**Salutations:**

Chairman of Tourism Trinidad Limited, Howard Chin-Lee

Acting Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Trinidad Limited, Heidi Alert

Acting Secretary General of Caribbean Tourism Organisation, Neil Walter

Chief Executive Officer Trinidad Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism Association, Hassel Thom

Vice President, Zap Water Communications, Jennifer Johnson

Our other stakeholders who're joining virtually

Special invitees

Local, regional and international media

I want to join with the Chairman before going in to my address in extending our empathy to all the tourism stakeholders , we understand that we are in a very difficult time in the tourism sector , culture and the arts as well, but the tourism sector is particularly hard hit.

Allow me to answer a question that is repeatedly asked in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting fallout. And that is, *What is the Ministry's Plan going forward?* I sought to give an answer to this question, firstly, in my Budget presentation and I will do so again today. And the first is that the Ministry, along with TTL, are working with the Ministry of Health and CARPHA in developing health protocols; preparing for the reopening in the face of this COVID-19 pandemic. We are in the process of rolling out very comprehensive hygiene standards for all our stakeholders in the sector.

Secondly, we have and will continue to place emphasis on domestic tourism. We feel that in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and with the closure of our borders domestic tourism – Trinidad and Tobago – is our newest and most exotic destination. And you heard the Chairman speak a little about it with our *Stay Tnt* and *Sweet, Sweet Trinidad* campaigns.

And thirdly, we will continue with our Destination Development program, which is where the launch of this website is most significant for developing the tourism product going forward.

And as we launch this website, I can't help but think about the short walk from the elevator at Tower C, where the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts is located to my office. And on the way to my office you must pass mounds upon mounds of dated promotional material in the form of pamphlets, booklets, and DVDs. And I can't help but think that in a time prior how much money the Trinidad and Tobago taxpayer would have had to pay in marketing the destination for such small marketing reach.

And now, with just this one website, all of those mounds of marketing and promotional material can now be found in just one repository in digital format. And this fits most squarely with Government's digitisation push.

We know that when it comes to planning a trip, and when searching for things to do on that trip, the platform of choice is a destination's website.

This VisitTrinidad Website will now become one of the most valuable tools and one of the first marketing tools and one of the first touch points in the customer journey

when making that decision to travel. When visiting this website, travellers are expected to find correct, trustworthy and practical information designed to inspire and capture their hearts and minds.

This website is designed to be the window to the beautiful island of Trinidad and its fun loving people and provide the first Brand Experience that focuses on the niches of Business Tourism, Event Tourism, Sport Tourism and Eco Tourism.

The VisitTrinidad Website now up and running follows the VisitTobago Website in marketing and promoting both destinations and we expect both to stand out in a very competitive tourism Industry.

In addition to our Destination Marketing, in terms of destination development, we are also seeking to improve airlift and presently we are in discussions with a couple of airlines who have expressed interest in flying to Tobago as well as Trinidad when the world moves to open up post COVID-19.

We also continue to maintain and develop our sites and attractions in anticipation of receiving our international visitors when the borders reopen, as well as to cater to our local citizens exploring the island.

We also continue to maintain and develop our sites and attractions in anticipation of receiving our international visitors when the borders reopen and as well to cater to our local citizens exploring the islands of Trinidad and Tobago.

So, in closing I say to our locals, and to our regional and international visitors, the island of Trinidad awaits you. It is an island unlike any other island in the world. We have so much to offer with our culture, our warmth and our energy. Take out your calendars, make your plans and come visit us when we reopen and when it's safe to do so. We cannot wait to welcome you.

To those at Tourism Trinidad Ltd, Chairman, Members of the Board and everyone else who worked to make this website a reality, I say congratulations. It is vivid, it is beautiful and a brilliant window to Destination Trinidad.

I thank you.