

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

**LAUNCH OF LIME 365 AND THE GO
TRINBAGO MOBILE APPLICATION**

FEATURE ADDRESS

**THE HONOURABLE SHAMFA CUDJOE
MINISTER OF TOURISM
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Date: Tuesday February 07, 2017

Venue: National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA)

Time: 6.00pm

- The Honourable Maxie Cuffie, Minister of Public Administration and Communications
 - The Honourable Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts
 - His Excellency José A. Serulle Ramia, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of the Dominican Republic
 - Members of the Diplomatic Corps
 - Mrs. Vidiah Ramkhelawan, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Tourism
 - His Worship the Mayor of Port of Spain, Alderman Joel Martinez
 - Ms. Ethlyn John, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and all other Ministry's senior executives
 - Ms. Arveon Mills, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC) and the TDC Management Team
 - Directors of the Board of the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC)
 - Mr. Le Quan Pearie, "Junior Minister of Tourism for Trinidad and Tobago 2016" and a student from the Manzanilla Secondary School
 - Colleagues and Partners in the Tourism Industry
 - Members of the Media
 - Other Specially Invited Guests
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Good Evening, ladies and gentlemen.

It is truly a pleasure to have you all join us for the launch of the Lime365 campaign and the GO TrinBago mobile application.

“Whey de lime?”

“When we limin’?”

These are both common greetings exchanged among Trinidadians and Tobagonians when we meet up unexpectedly. In fact, I am willing to bet that for the foreigners and visitors in our midst this evening, “lime” and “liming” were two of the first “Trini” words that you would have learnt - possibly before you even arrived on our shores.

Trinidadians and Tobagonians can make any occasion a lime. From football games to pot locks at the office. Then there are river limes to after work limes, hurricane limes, curfew lime, and of course, our world renowned Carnival – the ultimate liming season, we are a social people. “Liming” is the Trinbagonian way of life.

One of the things I especially love about our people is the warmth and spontaneity of us all. In response to the question of “When we limin’?” it is not unusual to hear, “My friend Adrian is having ah house lime this evening. Come nah.” Wait a minute... did you just invite someone to another person’s social event? Yes.

And the beauty of it is that the host... Adrian, in this story, would be perfectly fine with it. This is a testament to the warmth and hospitality for which our people are world renowned.

We are responsible for showing the world, the true beauty of living, the substance of socialising, the essence of entertaining, the art of liming.

With Lime 365, we aim to showcase our event calendar. Event tourism has played a major role in the development of tourism in Trinidad and Tobago. Let's take Carnival - our biggest event. Roughly 40,000 visitors each year, and responsible for our biggest revenues as it relates to tourist spend.

So it is not just about arrivals, but about the spend.

As a masquerade from Tobago I can tell you...accommodation, food, transportation, hair done, nails, bronze body, gym fees, glitters and accessories, spray boots, costume, makeup...all this effort and money for one event for two (2) days in the streets. Not to mention the pre-carnival fetes that are the greatest carnival spend. One 2-week season, so many events, so much to get into, and so much money to spend.

So today we celebrate events.

This calendar brought about by our heritage, our rich and diverse culture, and our unique ability to live in unity despites our various races, economic background, and ethnicity. "Lime" is a celebration of our people, our music, our food, and our inherent nature of being entertainers, the resilience of our people, facing the good and the not so good together.

We are known to be a happy people from a happy country, and "Lime" celebrates that happiness, that freedom, that spontaneity, that energy.

“Lime” is a celebration of you, “Lime” is a celebration of me, a celebration of all of us. Sometimes we focus on creating a product for the visitor. We fix this for the tourist, we build that for the tourist.

My approach to this is different...because I believe that a good place to live, is a good place to visit. We have to appreciate and celebrate ourselves first before we could ask others to appreciate us.

Further, the American visitor does not leave the USA to come here to for an American experience, they want the real deal, the true essence, and they want that original, unique, authentic and very special Trinidad experience. And that, we have in abundance.

One country, two different islands, endless possibilities for exploration and enjoyment.

Whether you or our guests are looking for an incredible night life, exciting eco-adventures, fantastic festivals, captivating cultural immersion or a little bit of everything, there is always something to do in Trinidad and Tobago.

We have developed a calendar of events that covers the major organised community and national events in Trinidad and Tobago. From the annual staples like all our Carnival events, Christmas traditions, Tobago Goat Race and Heritage Festival, Tobago Blue Food Festival and Fashion Week to fishing tournaments, regattas, hikes, church harvests, fetes and parties, theatre productions and fashion shows, there is something for you to do virtually every day that you are here.

Ladies and gentlemen, words cannot express how excited I am about the launch of our new GoTrinBago travel app. The first of its kind from the Ministry of Tourism, it is a key component of our Lime 365 and events.

We know that an increasing number of travellers conduct their information searches and book their vacations via digital channels. Thus, an effective digital marketing strategy is crucial to our tourism industry and the GoTrinBago app forms part of our destination's digital strategy.

According to a survey of consumer travel trends conducted by Travelport, 66% of leisure travellers and 59% of business travellers used digital means to research travel in 2015. Smartphones, too, are transforming travel industry trends; with 60% of travel searches starting on a mobile device.

Moreover, smartphones enable people to be more spontaneous when they arrive at their destination. Travellers increasingly rely on mobile phones to get their bearings when they arrive in a new destination. According to Think with Google, the market research arm of search engine giant, Google Inc, smartphone searches for hotels increased about 30% in 2015. Further, 85% of leisure travellers decide on activities **only after arrival at a destination**.

Since today's smartphones are equipped with GPS software, travellers often search for "things to do near me." Google's research also showed that search interest in queries related to "places to eat near me" more than doubled in 2015.

(As Carla would have demonstrated, you can find things to do and place of interest “near me” in the GoTrinBago app.)

Global online travel sales are forecasted to grow to US\$762 billion by 2019, and as we increase the functionality of the GoTrinBago app in the coming months, the destination and our stakeholders will be poised to tap into that market, with the ability to book tours and accommodation from the touch of a button on your phone.

So we continue to monitor, expand, advance this new application...making it more accessible, more user-friendly, more helpful to our stakeholders, more useful for our locals and visitors. Further we encourage the general public and all stakeholders to continue to make recommendations and contributions toward its continuous development and expansion.

We encourage all service providers to come on-board. Social media developers, marketing strategists and event promoters. Bureau of standards, Public health, bankers, so that stakeholders could accept payments for online booking.

We have a long way to go to catch up with our counterparts. And that is further compounded by our current economic difficulties and social challenges. Then we grapple with competition from our more experienced sister islands within and beyond our region, the opening up of Cuba as a vacation destination, affordable airlift to both islands in the nation, the need to improve travel and trade facilitation, security challenges that affect the visitors experience, then we have our biggest market, VFR (visiting friends

and relatives), “Trinis” abroad (*accounting for roughly 40% of our yearly arrivals*) afraid of leaving the US due to new immigration regulations....

So it is about survival of the fittest.

And remaining relevant, attractive and competitive is becoming harder and harder. We all want more as it relates to the sector’s performance and enrichment. But how do we expect these huge and immediate returns when over the years we have not been making the appropriate investment?

Our Tourism is our business. That means a greater collaboration, greater communication; greater unity, greater responsibility; a greater sense of ownership and building stronger, more meaningful partnerships.

We all have to make that commitment to put down our personal agendas, and resist the urge to pursue our political agendas, and rally around that red, white and black in the best interest of the sector. We have to do it; nobody else can do it for us. We have to work harder and smarter; and we must do it together.

So we need Government on board, private sector on board, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service on board, all government ministries on board, street food vendors on board, entertainers on board, tour guides and operators on board, the associations, everybody across the nation **ON BOARD**.

So today ladies and gentlemen, as we launch these two exciting initiatives, we feel a sense of duty and pride.

Proud to show the world that we are Trinbago and Trinbago is We. We are confident that both residents and visitors will find Lime 365 and our GoTrinBago App very useful in figuring out where to explore, what to do and how to find the next lime. You might think you know everything there is to know about what to see and do in Trinidad and Tobago – but with over 900 points of interest and 234 events and counting, you are bound to make a new discovery. Lime 365, GoTrinBago, your ultimate guide to discovering Trinidad and Tobago.

As I close, I extend heartfelt thanks to the TDC, Ministry of Tourism, the stakeholders, the company for bringing this initiative to reality. We thank you for your hard work and we look forward to your continuous support.

I want to sincerely thank all of you for “liming” with us this evening.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and enjoyable Carnival season. We liming 365... there is always something to do, always somewhere to go in Trinidad and Tobago!

Thank you.

February 07, 2016