



2019 **BUDGET STATEMENT**

Deputy Chief Secretary and
Secretary of Finance and the Economy

ASSEMBLYMAN JOEL JACK



Re-engineering for Growth and Expansion

BOOSTING THE TOURISM SECTOR: The development of the island's tourism sector is a priority area for the Tobago House of Assembly. In keeping with this mandate, the Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation continues to explore initiatives to improve the sector especially in the area of cruise tourism. The 2017-2018 Cruise Season was the most successful season in Tobago's history with a record of over 80,000 passengers visiting Tobago's shores. In photo: Local folk performers dressed as 'Dame Lorraine' engage tourists in a dance whilst others enjoy the sounds of the steel pan following the docking of a cruise ship at the Scarborough harbour.





BUDGET STATEMENT FOR FISCAL 2019

Re-engineering for Growth and Expansion

- Economic Expansion and Diversification
- Fostering Innovation and Creativity
- Tourism Sector Development
- Monetising Our Cultural Resources
- Stimulating the Agriculture Sector
- Investment in Physical Infrastructure
- Education and Human Capital Development
- Provision of Housing Opportunities
- Improving Healthcare and Well-being
- Sport and Youth Development
- Protecting Our Pristine Natural Environment
- Community Empowerment
- Public Service Modernisation

Presented By:

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Deputy Chief Secretary & Secretary of Finance and the Economy

Monday 25th June 2018

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RE-ENGINEERING FOR GROWTH AND EXPANSION

1 Introductory Remarks

Madam Presiding Officer,
Honourable Chief Secretary,
Secretaries,
Assistant Secretaries,
Chief Administrator and other Administrators,
Senior Staff of the Tobago House of Assembly,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen in the Public Gallery,
Local and International Audiences following this presentation on radio, on television, and on the worldwide web,
Members of the Media,
Good Morning.

- 1.1 Once again, the honour and privilege is mine as the Secretary of Finance and the Economy, to present the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) for fiscal 2019. Today's submission, as with all my previous budget submissions to this Honourable House, represents the collective effort of many individuals and groups within the Tobago House of Assembly and the wider Tobago community. For this, I wish to express my sincerest gratitude. I wish to specially thank the Chief Secretary, all Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries and staff of the various Divisions who contributed to the development of this presentation. Special commendation is also extended to the employees of the Division of Finance and the Economy and the Planning Department in the Office of the Chief Secretary for their role in crafting today's submission. My appreciation is extended as well to the non-governmental and community-based organisations, individuals, and the six hundred and fifty (650) Tobagonians who participated in the 2018 THA Budget Survey. Their numerous suggestions have assisted us in identifying some of the initiatives outlined in this budget statement. I would also like to thank my wife and the rest of my family for their unswerving support at all times. Above all, I thank Almighty God for his continued guidance, grace and the

tremendous generosity of all who have worked with me as a team, to help craft today's submission.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 1.2 During the last fiscal year, we in Tobago, like the rest of the national community, have had to deal with our fair share of economic and fiscal challenges. Notwithstanding the difficult circumstances, we have worked assiduously to stabilize economic activity on the island, while at the same time keeping the needed focus on implementing our plans for securing Tobago's longer-term developmental needs. To this end, we are actively collaborating with the central government to expand and diversify Tobago's tourism base, through the construction of a seven hundred and fifty (750) room Sandals Resort on the island. We see this resort as not only adding to the stock of high quality rooms in Tobago, but, more importantly, as providing the necessary catalyst to strengthen linkages among tourism, agriculture, education and our cultural industries. A reliable supply of high quality food is an essential ingredient for the hotel industry. The Sandals Project therefore could not have arrived at a more opportune moment as it presents Tobagonians with the added impetus to upgrade our farms and fishing establishments to meet an expanded demand for food. Indeed, the project has already started to generate strong interest among local, national and even international entrepreneurs who see Tobago as a potential frontier for investments in some high-tech niches in agriculture.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 1.3 All Tobagonians should recognise this project as an important "game-changer" that will not only contribute to our national diversification thrust, but simultaneously provide a base for modernising the tourism sector in Tobago.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 1.4 The Assembly remains steadfast in its commitment to ensure that our development momentum continues and that the quality of life and the standard of living of the people of Tobago are not severely impacted. The qualities of resilience and hard work for which we Tobagonians have been known are the very same qualities we need to draw on to take us through this

difficult period. Fortunately, we have a central government that is sensitive to our needs. In fact, a number of mega projects are earmarked for Tobago and we appear to be much closer to attaining the goal of Self-Government. We therefore have a lot to look forward to in the near future.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 1.5 Self-Government for our island promises significant opportunities for growth and development. However, if we are to derive optimal benefit from the autonomy we seek, social and economic transformation is essential. We are at a critical juncture and there is a need for a strategic review of all the operations of the Assembly in order to re-engineer and redesign our policies and processes consistent with international best practice. For example, the public service in its current form, must be re-engineered to manage this transformation. Every resident and institution in both the public and private sectors must therefore be prepared for the additional responsibilities which autonomy will thrust upon us. Accordingly, this year's Budget Statement is themed: ***'Re-engineering for Growth and Expansion'***.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 1.6 The structure of my Budget Statement is as follows: I begin with a review of the international, regional and national economic developments which will provide the context for understanding our own situation here in Tobago. Next, I will examine the Assembly's financial and budgetary developments over the past year. This will be followed by an extensive discussion of our past budgetary performance and the focal areas of the fiscal 2019 Budget Statement and then a presentation of the budget estimates for fiscal 2019 and the proposed financing mechanisms. In the penultimate section, I will examine some ongoing socio-economic issues affecting Tobago and then conclude the presentation thereafter.

2 Global, Regional and National Context

a. International Economy

Madam Presiding Officer

- 2.1 While it is true that the current projections for growth in the international economy are positive, it is also true that in the last six (6) months, the prospects for continued expansion have been dimmed by heightened uncertainty. This has come about for several reasons. First, there was a significant correction in global stock markets in February 2018 and a sharp rise in the Vix, which is an index of market volatility. Markets recovered somewhat since then, but investor sentiment has clearly changed and there is an expectation that another correction may be imminent. Second, the Federal Reserve in the United States has continued on its path of increasing interest rates. However, while interest rates at the short end of the market have risen since the beginning of the year, interest rates at the long end have not risen as much, leading to a significant flattening of the yield curve. In contrast, the European Central Bank has postponed increasing interest rates until 2019. The realignment of interest rates between the United States and Europe is likely to see a strengthening of the US dollar.
- 2.2 Third, the Trump administration has implemented tariffs against steel and aluminium products from Canada, Mexico and Europe and against a range of goods from China. These countries have retaliated and the global trade regime is on the brink of a trade war, the outcome and impact of which are uncertain. What can be said with some confidence, is that any decline in global trade will impact global growth negatively and could also adversely impact financial markets.
- 2.3 Fourth, the revision to the tax regime in the United States was instituted earlier this year with the objective of causing US businesses avoiding taxes by locating overseas, to bring jobs back to the United States. Fifth, crude oil prices have risen since the beginning of 2018, although natural gas prices have not generally followed suit. Higher oil prices if sustained, could eventually impact inflation expectations. Already in the United States, which is now the largest oil producer in the world, higher oil prices are causing production to increase

again and this is prompting OPEC and Russia to re-calibrate their strategy to try to stabilise the market at a higher level of prices.

b. Regional Economy

Madam Presiding Officer

- 2.4 The regional economy presents a mixed picture. The economies of Guyana and Jamaica are doing well. In Guyana, this is due to the optimism generated from the massive oil discoveries there which would make Guyana a significant oil exporter within a few years. In the case of Jamaica, the austerity of the IMF programme has now begun to bear fruit. Its Debt to GDP ratio is declining, and economic growth is projected to increase over the next two (2) years. In contrast, following the general election in May this year, the economy of Barbados has been revealed to be in more difficulty than originally thought. Its Debt to GDP ratio is much higher than the figure officially published before, and the new administration is actively engaged in discussions with the IMF and other multilateral agencies, on a debt restructuring plan and an adjustment programme to stabilise the economy and return it to growth over the medium term.

c. National Economy

Madam Presiding Officer

- 2.5 It is against this backdrop that we can assess the current state of the national economy of Trinidad and Tobago and its prospects over the medium term. In his recent Mid-Year Review, the Minister of Finance expressed some cautious optimism that the national economy is beginning to turn around. This is based on higher natural gas production as BPTT's Juniper project has come on stream, and production from other fields operated by Shell also increased. Natural gas production has increased from 3.35 billion scf/day in 2017 to 3.7 billion scf/day in the first four (4) months of 2018. The expectation is that this increased production, while still below the level needed for comfort, will boost production and exports of both LNG and petrochemicals in 2018. The Minister of Finance has also indicated that the fiscal deficit originally projected for 2018 is likely to be much smaller. In addition, while inflation remains subdued, unemployment continues to tick upwards.

- 2.6 These are indeed positive signs which if sustained, will eventually see an improvement in the national economy. However, further fiscal consolidation remains necessary and there is a need to stabilise the decline in foreign exchange reserves and eliminate the current account deficit on the balance of payments. These are the critical markers of successful management of our macro-economic situation.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.7 Let me turn now to a more detailed analysis of the state of the Tobago economy.

d. Tobago Economy

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.8 The most recent Survey of Business Establishments conducted by the Division of Finance and the Economy for Tobago confirms that in 2017 the services sector was still the most dominant sector, accounting for approximately 90 per cent of the island's GDP. Given the well-known vulnerabilities of the services sector to the vagaries of the international economic environment, diversification of the Tobago economy is imperative. The Survey of Business Establishments suggests that Tobago's GDP at constant prices fell from \$1.85B in 2016 to \$1.82B in 2017, a marginal decline of 1.6 per cent. The data indicate that the share of general government activity in Tobago's GDP was about 44 per cent in 2017 and the share of finance, insurance, real estate and business services in Tobago's GDP was about 27 per cent in the same year. Madam Presiding Officer, the tourism sector, which comprises hotel and guest houses and distribution and restaurants, accounted for about 14 per cent of Tobago's GDP in 2017. Further, the data show that the share of transport, storage and communications was about 6 per cent of Tobago's GDP in 2017. Finally, the data indicated that the agriculture and manufacturing sectors were relatively small; both sectors contributing only about 2 per cent to Tobago's GDP in 2017.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.9 The most recent labour market data from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) suggest that unemployment in Tobago for the second quarter of 2017 was approximately 6.6 per cent, up from the 4.8 per cent recorded in the comparative period in 2016. At the national level, the rate of unemployment

for the second quarter of 2017 was approximately 5.3 per cent. The data suggest that in the second quarter of 2017, approximately 62 per cent of persons with jobs in Tobago were employed in the state sector, with the private sector employing approximately 38 per cent. Again, these data point to the urgent need to diversify the Tobago economy.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.10 The latest data on prices available from the Central Bank suggest that Tobago recorded headline and food price inflation in March 2018 of approximately 3.0 per cent and 2.3 per cent, respectively. For the twelve (12) month period ending March 2018, Tobago's headline and food price inflation rates averaged 1.5 per cent and 3.7 per cent, respectively. Comparatively, at the national level, headline and food price inflation in March 2018 was approximately 2.8 per cent and 3.7 per cent, respectively. For the twelve (12) month period ending March 2018, the headline and food price inflation rates nationally averaged 1.5 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively.

3 Review of Recent Financial and Budgetary Developments

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.1 In the financial year ended 30th September 2017, the Tobago House of Assembly received a total of **\$2,069,764,412** from the Central Government. The sum of **\$1,781,174,412** was received for Recurrent Expenditure and **\$288,590,000** was received for Development Programme Expenditure. The sum of **\$207,248,122** was collected as tax and non-tax revenues in Tobago on behalf of the Consolidated Fund and used to offset the total appropriation, bringing the total Parliamentary Appropriation in fiscal 2017 to **\$2,277,012,534**, approximately 14.8 per cent less than in fiscal 2016. Revenues generated independently by the Tobago House of Assembly totalled **\$18,563,402**.
- 3.2 For fiscal 2017, Recurrent and Development Programme Expenditure by the Assembly amounted to **\$2,246,374,776**. Of this sum, Recurrent Expenditure amounted to **\$1,859,417,576**, while Development Programme Expenditure amounted to **\$386,957,200**.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.3 At the end of fiscal 2016, unspent balances amounting to **\$113,498,831** were transferred to the Contingencies Account. These unspent balances were used in fiscal 2017 to finance capital expenditure and urgent projects and programmes, in keeping with our mandate to improve the standard of living of all Tobagonians. Some of the major projects and programmes undertaken include the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP)--\$38.3M; the Community Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP)--\$18M; Shaw Park Recreation Grounds and Cultural Complex--\$9.85M and the School Expansion Programme--\$7.02M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.4 For fiscal 2018, the total budgetary allocation to the Tobago House of Assembly amounted to \$2.18B; of which \$1.86B was allocated for Recurrent Expenditure and \$315.7M for Development Programme Expenditure. The overall budgetary allocation in fiscal 2018 declined by 6.7 per cent.

4 Update of Existing Developmental Initiatives and Elaboration on New Priorities for Fiscal 2019

Introduction

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.1 The budget numbers, which I will present later on, were largely influenced by the PNM Manifesto for the 2017 THA Election, the THA's Pre-Budget Survey, the contributions from various stakeholders in the Pre-Budget Consultations for 2018 and the budgetary submissions of the various Divisions. The budget for fiscal 2019 focuses on the following thematic areas: Economic Expansion and Diversification, Fostering Innovation and Creativity, Tourism Sector Development, Monetising Our Cultural Resources, Stimulating the Agriculture Sector, Investment in Physical Infrastructure, Education and Human Capital Development, Provision of Housing Opportunities, Improving Healthcare and Well-being, Sport and Youth Development, Protecting our Pristine Natural Environment, Community Empowerment and Public Service

Modernisation. Madam Presiding Officer, I will now elaborate on each of these thematic areas in turn, starting with Economic Expansion and Diversification.

a. Economic Expansion and Diversification

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.2 The urgent need to intensify our diversification efforts in Tobago cannot be overstated. Our macroeconomic indicators support the need to diversify the island's economy thereby making it more resilient to internal and external shocks. Critical to our overall strategy of diversification are our activities at the Business Development Unit in the Division of Community Development, Enterprise Development and Labour, the Strategic Business Development Unit, the Eco-Industrial Development Company of Tobago (E-IDCOT) and the Venture Capital Equity Fund Limited (VCEFL) at the Division of Finance and the Economy, and our support for private sector development and expansion.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.3 In the last year, the Business Development Unit provided loans and grants totalling \$1.62M to seventy (70) entrepreneurs. In addition, the Unit provided capacity building training programmes to eighty-one (81) loan and grant recipients in a wide range of areas including accounting and business management. Since the inception of the Enterprise Assistance Fund (EAF) and Enterprise Assistance Grant Programme (EAGP), Tobagonians have received approximately \$46M in financial assistance along with technical support, to start, operate and expand their businesses.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.4 This Assembly has made significant investments in facilitating entrepreneurship and business activity on the island. Over the next fiscal year, the Unit will continue to provide financial and technical support through its two (2) signature programmes: the Enterprise Assistance Fund and the Enterprise Assistance Grant Programmes. The Unit will also intensify its community outreach activities to ensure that persons throughout Tobago can benefit from their services. Madam Presiding Officer, the Assembly has initiated discussions with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) towards the establishment of a Business Incubator at the Cove Eco-Industrial and

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH: The Strategic Business Development Unit at the Division of Finance and the Economy facilitate training opportunities to equip entrepreneurs with the tools necessary to take their businesses to the next level. As a result, Tobago entrepreneurs have participated annually in the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association's Trade and Investment Convention (TIC). At TIC, entrepreneurs are exposed to hundreds of local, regional and international buyers with the potential to establish networks with industry specialists for business growth and export. In 2017, the Tobago Pavilion copped the "Best Booth" prize in the large booth category, the most prestigious award at the event.



Business Park (CEIBP). This incubator will provide start-ups and Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) with the nurturing environment needed in the early phase of their development with intensive hands-on business support from subject-matter experts and experienced entrepreneurs, as well as access to finance. This initiative will be jointly executed by the Business Development Unit, E-IDCOT and the Tobago Venture Capital Equity Fund Limited.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.5 Our work at the Strategic Business Development Unit in the Division of Finance and the Economy is also critical to our diversification thrust. In the last year, the Strategic Business Development Unit developed a database of existing SMEs that have demonstrated some level of export potential. Information was gathered on their current capacity and the required resources to assist in their expansion with the aim of enhancing export readiness. The Unit supported this thrust through the facilitation of a number of capacity building training workshops in a range of topics including: Export Fundamentals and Business Development. The Unit collaborated with ExporTT to host the “Tobago Export Development Program” where thirteen (13) businesses primarily in the agro-processing sector received training and support in preparation for the export market. The Unit also collaborated with FashionTT on the “Value Chain Investment Program,” which saw noted Tobago designers benefiting from business development training and support from international fashion experts. Madam Presiding Officer, in the next fiscal year, the Strategic Business Development Unit will continue to offer capacity building training programmes for Tobago entrepreneurs to gain and maintain access to export markets. In addition, the Unit will continue to facilitate the testing and branding of Tobago’s products to assist entrepreneurs in gaining access to regional and international markets. Central to this, is the establishment of a product testing facility to ensure compliance with international standards. In this regard, discussions are under way with E-IDCOT to facilitate the construction of this facility at Cove.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.6 E-IDCOT also has a significant role to play in our overall diversification thrust and it continues to encourage entrepreneurial activity by providing both land

and factory space at subsidized rates to allow persons to develop and expand their business in Tobago. Madam Presiding Officer, E-IDCOT is also currently developing a proposal for the processing of essential oils including bay oil. This project has significant job creation and foreign exchange earning potential.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.7 You may recall from my budget presentation last year, I indicated that a feasibility study would commence for the construction of a commercial cargo port in Tobago. I am pleased to inform this Honourable House that following the completion of the tendering process, the consulting engineering firm Lee Young and Partners Ltd was contracted to conduct the feasibility study on the best location for this commercial cargo port. The study is at an advanced stage and the final report is expected before the end of this fiscal year. A commercial cargo port in Tobago can facilitate the development of the light manufacturing sector as well as improve the efficiency of commercial activity on the island.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.8 The Tobago Venture Capital Equity Fund Limited continues to advance its mandate to diversify the Tobago economy and to re-ignite the entrepreneurial spirit of the Tobago people. The Company has completed a feasibility study for a Tobago Feed Mill, which shows that this project is commercially viable. As such, the Company issued a request for proposals for this project and the submissions are currently being reviewed. Over the last year, the Company has also received a number of proposals for investment in the Clean and Light Manufacturing, Agriculture & Agro-Processing, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Renewable Energy & Green Technology sectors. The Company continues to work with potential investees, and following the necessary due diligence and analysis, funds will be disbursed and the investment will be added to the Company's portfolio. Madam Presiding Officer, the Company continues to seek additional capital funding from various sources. One such opportunity currently being explored, is funding from a multilateral agency which would provide additional funding support for investees.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.9 Beyond the work of Assembly-led entities to facilitate economic diversification and expansion as previously outlined, the Assembly continues to work with the business community to develop and strengthen the private sector in Tobago by providing an enabling environment for them to succeed. Particularly, in view of the problems on the air and sea bridge, we know that the private sector in Tobago faced challenges and we continue to work with these stakeholders in finding feasible and sustainable solutions. As an Assembly, we continue to upgrade our accounting and procurement systems to ensure seamless and transparent interactions with various suppliers of goods and services in the private sector, ahead of the proclamation of the new procurement legislation.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.10 As a major employer with significant influence on productivity, we are committed to work with the private sector on this issue. Earlier this year, the Assembly conducted its second iteration of the Tobago Productivity Survey and the results will be used to inform our approach and management of productivity in Tobago. We will continue to work with the business community as well as the labour unions as we confront this productivity issue.

Additionally, Madam Presiding Officer, administrative challenges with the land license regime continue to affect the level of foreign direct investment to the island. Accordingly, in an effort to streamline the application and processing of applications, the Division of Finance and the Economy is working diligently with the Ministry of Finance and the Economy with input from stakeholders in the Tobago Business Community, to review the application process to achieve greater efficiency.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.11 Let me now turn to the subject of innovation and creativity.

b. Fostering Innovation and Creativity

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.12 We are mindful of the importance of innovation and creativity if our businesses are to develop and maintain their competitive advantage in the various industries in which they operate. We also recognise that businesses which engage in innovation to differentiate and create new products and services

typically outperform their competitors. As such, we continue to work to stimulate innovation in several areas. Madam Presiding Officer, you may recall that only last year, the Tobago Information Technology Limited (TITL) collaborated with its strategic partners Bmobile, Huawei, Ginamco Caribbean Ltd, the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) and the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) to host a two (2) day ICT Summit themed, '*A Technology Enabled Future for Tobago*'. This event brought together a number of local, regional and international speakers and presenters and established a platform to guide Tobago's participation in the ICT industry.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.13 A crucial element of the Assembly's ICT strategy for Tobago is the newly established Innovation Centre which was constructed at a cost of \$7.7M. This Centre currently offers international ICT certification, such as Pearson VUE international testing, which would increase our ICT human resource capacity on the island. TITL is also in the process of having the Innovation Centre designated a CISCO Networking Academy, thereby allowing for specialised certification in ICT courses. Further, discussions are ongoing with CARIRI to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for training in software development for Tobagonians.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.14 Another key initiative in our strategy to foster innovation and creativity relates to our ongoing efforts to establish Tobago as an 'intelligent island'. To materialize this intent, discussions with Huawei Technologies began last year, and continued during the Chief Secretary's trip to China where he visited the Huawei headquarters. As an Assembly, we have begun to assess the critical readiness indicators required for this initiative, including broadening the reach and reliability of coverage, and ensuring the robustness of the infrastructure required to support connectivity and communication. These assessments will include the relevant utilities and state agencies, and other key private sector stakeholders.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.15 If we are to create the necessary ecosystem for innovation to thrive, this development cannot be pursued on its own. As such, we have committed to supporting the human capital development relevant to the ‘intelligent island’ project alongside the required infrastructure investment. Together these human capital and financial investments will support the establishment of a platform to regulate and develop various E-Services. E-Services will have significant impact on the quality of life of our citizens, including improved management of our safety and security. Plans are also under way to utilise these services to facilitate greater data-driven decision-making; more efficient and effective planning in the public sector; improvement in the ease of doing business particularly in areas such as agriculture and tourism; and improved learning management systems in education. Institutions and cities globally are becoming smarter and more intelligent, leveraging ICT as an enabler of socio-economic development, and so these initiatives provide the fertile soil for their growth in Tobago. It would behoove us to ensure that Tobago takes its rightful place in this interconnected world.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.16 Also critical to our thrust to stimulate innovation in Tobago over the next fiscal year, will be the work undertaken by E-IDCOT. You may recall that last year, E-IDCOT signed a Joint Venture Agreement with TSTT to construct a Tier 3 Data Centre at the CEIBP. This agreement has forged a new company, Nuklyus, whose responsibility it is to manage the construction and operations of this data centre. This Centre will offer colocation, managed and cloud services such as data storage, backup and recovery, disaster recovery and business continuity, and other high-end security and advanced telecommunications services, to companies renting office facilities at the Park, as well as other local and international companies in the Latin American and Caribbean region, thereby offering significant revenue generating potential. It is estimated that global data centre colocation market is projected to grow from US\$31.5B in 2017 to US\$62.3B in 2022 while wholesale colocation is expected to have the highest compound growth rate for that period. Madam Presiding Officer, our data centre at Cove can not only fill a void in this currently underserved market, but can also serve as a catalyst to propel the growth of

the ICT industry in Tobago by playing a key role in leveraging ICT as an engine for transformation, and in bridging the digital divide.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.17 E-IDCOT continues to collaborate with the Anime Caribe, YTEPP and TITL to execute its animation programme in Tobago. Earlier this year, the company successfully hosted an Animation Day with Sekani Solomon, a Tobago son of the soil who gained international acclaim for his graphic work in the record breaking blockbuster movie Black Panther. Over one hundred (100) students from secondary schools throughout Tobago grasped the opportunity to interact with Mr. Solomon and explore the various opportunities that the world of animation offers. Following this event E-IDCOT is forging ahead to outfit an animation training studio at the CEIBP.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.18 I now turn to tourism.

c. Tourism Sector Development

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.19 Over the last few years, our tourism sector has faced its fair share of challenges. This Administration is committed to addressing them. To spearhead our revitalization efforts, the Tobago Tourism Agency was established last year and mandated to lead the resurgence of the island's tourism product and the marketing and repositioning of Tobago as a premier tourism destination. Madam Presiding Officer, the Agency convened stakeholder consultations which informed the development of a three (3) year Road Map for Growth. This Road Map sets an aggressive target to increase tourist arrivals to Tobago by over 90 per cent as well as on-island expenditure over the next three (3) years. The Road Map focuses primarily on areas of product development and destination marketing supported by a carefully crafted airlift and cruise strategy.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.20 As it relates to product development and destination management services, several initiatives are outlined in the Road Map. They include:



SHOWCASING THE ISLAND'S TOURISM PRODUCT:

Tobago cultural performers showcase various aspects of Tobago's art form at the 2017 World Travel Market in London. The event offers strategic opportunities for Tobago's tourism stakeholders and serves as a platform to develop linkages in the global travel market.

- A comprehensive product audit on all tourism sites, attractions and accommodation;
- Rehabilitation of sensitive marine areas and the pursuit of international certification such as Blue Flag;
- Improvement to tourism related infrastructure around Tobago including: better signage; upgrades to nature trails; beautification of Scarborough, and upgrade and restoration of beach facilities;
- Facilitation of the upgrade to existing accommodation facilities through the Tourism Accommodation Upgrade Programme (TAUP) and other initiatives; and,
- Enhanced customer service training throughout the tourism industry facilitated by the Tobago Tourism and Hospitality Institute.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.21 As it pertains to marketing, among the key initiatives outlined in the Road Map are the:

- Rebranding of the destination to ensure our island is differentiated in the market place;
- Continuous monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as visitor arrivals and visitor expenditure;
- Review of key niche markets as well as potential target markets to develop strategic marketing programmes to drive incremental business;
- Development of a cooperative marketing programme with hotels and other stakeholders to enhance overall marketing spend; and,
- Development of a new online and social media campaign as well as the creation of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy to support all marketing activities.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.22 I now turn to monetising our cultural resources.



THE TOBAGO INTERNATIONAL CYCLING CLASSIC:

The Tobago International Cycling Classic, a highly acclaimed international cycling event attracts many local, regional and international enthusiasts to Tobago's shores. It is one of the initiatives that serves to boost the island's sports tourism thrust.

d. Monetising Our Cultural Resources

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.23 Cultural industries in developed countries are among some of the more rapidly growing industries and the largest contributors to GDP. Cultural industries can no longer be deemed secondary to the ‘real’ economy as they have become major catalysts of growth in the global economy, increasingly moving closer to being the centre of economic action across the world. Undoubtedly, Tobago has a rich cultural heritage and there is a need for us to realize the economic benefits to be derived from this. Over the years, we have invested significantly in our culture by providing financial and technical support to the growing number of events and festivals on the island’s events calendar. However, we now need to leverage our cultural resources even more effectively to propel our own economic development. It is therefore important that we fully exploit all the natural, yet largely untapped synergies which exist between culture and other key sectors of our economy, particularly tourism and manufacturing. Over the next fiscal year, as part of a broader strategy to monetise our culture, we will:

- Provide greater technical and financial support to allow our cultural practitioners to showcase their cultural products in local, regional and international markets;
- Endorse the effective implementation of culture within our education curriculum while promoting careers in cultural industries;
- Introduce additional vocational programmes to train our cultural practitioners in the various aspects of the cultural industry thereby enabling them to maximise and monetise their skills;
- Provide greater financial support and training to existing and potential cultural entrepreneurs;
- Support our existing festivals while encouraging the development of new festivals; and,
- Encourage cultural groups and practitioners to exploit financial opportunities available through the increased cruise ship arrivals.

SHOWCASING TOBAGO'S HISTORY AND CULTURE:

The Tobago House of Assembly continues to pursue creative initiatives to depict the island's rich cultural history with the aim of providing an enlightening experience for Tobagonians and visitors. In keeping with this, the Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation launched the Interactive Museum at Fort King George Heritage Park. Historical re-enactments and narrations by cultural experts are the main features of the Interactive Museum.



Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.24 A novel initiative of this Administration was the Fort King George Interactive Museum. This initiative involved the creation of a living museum re-enacting the historical settings and the natural environment to simulate past experiences and events. The event transformed Fort King George and its environs into an interactive theatrical space to exhibit and celebrate the history of the Fort. This experience, which was hosted last year for the first time was extremely successful and is an event with significant revenue generating potential. It was estimated that approximately three thousand (3,000) cruise ship visitors participated in this activity last year. This event will continue in the next fiscal year with increased frequency. The Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation is in the process of drafting a Request for Proposals with a view to having theatre groups and others in the private sector participate in the management and operation of the interactive museum.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.25 I now turn to the Agriculture sector

e. Stimulating the Agriculture Sector

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.26 Agriculture continues to be a critical priority for this Administration. In the last year, the Division of Food Production, Forestry and Fisheries undertook a number of initiatives aimed at stimulating the agriculture sector in Tobago. In this regard, one hundred and fifty (150) new crop and livestock farmers were registered and the Extension Unit conducted approximately three thousand (3,000) farm visits to approximately two thousand five hundred (2,500) crop and livestock farmers. In addition, approximately twelve thousand two hundred and fifty (12,250) tissue cultured plants were distributed from our Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory at Goldsborough. Approximately fifty (50) capacity building training seminars were offered through the Division and the Kendal Farm School, in a wide range of areas to enhance the technical capacity of farmers and prospective farmers on the island. The average attendance at these seminars ranged from 25-50 participants and topics included: crop and

CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE:

Building human resource capacity through education and skills training is a high priority of the Tobago House of Assembly.

In photo: Workers of the Division of Infrastructure, Quarries and the Environment showcase seedlings at the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) Nurseries in Roxborough.



livestock production, beekeeping, post-harvest management, livestock health, and agro-processing. Additionally, incentives valued at about \$1M were paid out to crop and livestock farmers.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.27 In the next fiscal year, the Division of Food Production, Forestry and Fisheries proposes a number of initiatives to forge a progressive path for agriculture which will result in the development of a dynamic and multi-faceted agro-production sector. In this context, the Division recently submitted to the Executive Council for its consideration, the Goldsborough Agricultural Irrigation project on the Goldsborough Agricultural Estate. This estate covers 951.4 hectares, spanning the villages of Goodwood, Goldsborough and Pembroke. This project will treat with the lack of a sustainable water supply during the dry season and its adverse effects on the farming community. It will ultimately serve to boost agricultural production on the island. The estimated cost of this project is \$8.5M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.28 The Division also proposes to continue its 'Eat Local' Campaign as part of its overall strategy to promote the production and consumption of local produce. The farming community stands to benefit from this initiative, as the 'Eat Local' Campaign will propel the demand for local produce which in turn will increase production, sale and consequently farm income. The Division is collaborating with other Divisions of the Assembly as well as with the Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute and the Tobago Agricultural Society, to promote a more effective and inclusive campaign going forward.
- 4.29 The Division of Food Production, Forestry and Fisheries also proposes to collaborate with the University of the West Indies and PCS Nitrogen on the planting of fruit trees in all primary and secondary schools in Tobago, where possible. The fruit trees for consideration include guava, cherry, five finger, soursop and pommecythere.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.30 To support all our initiatives in agriculture, we will continue to upgrade and construct agricultural access roads in all major farming communities on the



EAT LOCAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS TOP CHEF COMPETITION:

In photo: Students of the Mason Hall Secondary School participate in the Eat Local Secondary Schools Top Chef Competition at the Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute.

island. This will open up more lands for agriculture and other developments. The Assembly continues to support the Tobago Agricultural Society and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector. Madam Presiding Officer, today, please permit me to place special emphasis on the Tobago Apicultural Society (TAS). The Beekeeping community in Tobago is a small yet growing sector with approximately forty (40) active beekeepers and around four hundred (400) managed colonies. There is significant room for growth and development of this sector as the honey produced in Tobago has the advantage of being of a distinctly high quality. The product quality as well as the European taste profile has resulted in a high European demand for Tobago's honey; while locally, the demand already far exceeds supply.

- 4.31 In this regard, there is great potential for honey production to be a commercially viable industry in Tobago. The Assembly will therefore implement measures to: facilitate and support the development of the industry through education and capacity building training, promote beekeeping as a viable source of income, provide funding to assist with obtaining beekeeping equipment through existing loan and grant facilities, as well as facilitate the establishment of a testing facility. Madam Presiding Officer, this Assembly is committed to the expansion and sustainability of the agriculture sector.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.32 Let us turn our attention to the investment in physical infrastructure.

f. Investment in Physical Infrastructure

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.33 We are mindful of the fact that investment in physical infrastructure is not only critical to influencing the quality of life and living standard of citizens, but it is also a vital stimulant to economic activity. In fact, there is a growing body of literature which provides compelling evidence to suggest that in societies such as ours, public investment in infrastructure serves to 'crowd in' private sector investment and stimulate economic activity. We have invested significantly in our physical infrastructure over the past seventeen (17) years and we will continue to do so in fiscal year 2019. In fact, in the last year, approximately \$44.3M was spent on the upgrade of secondary roads in Tobago

LAMBEAU BRIDGE: The recently commissioned Lambeau Bridge is one of five bridges to be constructed along the Milford Road and affords motorists utilising this route an improved traffic flow. The structure was completed under the budgeted figure at a cost of \$14M.



in areas such as the Blenheim Housing Project in Hope, the Arnos Vale Road, Daniel Trace in Carnbee, Farm Road in Mason Hall, Idlewild Trace, Mc Knight Trace in Bon Accord and Smithfield Connector Road in lower Scarborough. In addition, under the Windward Road Development Programme, approximately \$16M was expended to conduct road improvement works in areas such as Delaford and Charlotteville. Under the Pure Programme, a major sea defense stabilization project was completed to stem rapid coastal erosion at 'Hanging Down' in Roxborough at a total cost of \$10.4M. In addition, the Lambeau Bridge, was formally opened just recently at a cost of approximately \$14M. Work is now 58 per cent complete on the construction of the Roxborough Administrative Complex which is scheduled for completion early in the next fiscal year at a projected cost of \$34M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.34 Looking ahead, we must continue to ensure that optimum benefit is derived from the significant investment the Assembly continues to make in developing our physical infrastructure. Earlier this year the Executive Council approved the establishment of an Infrastructure Committee to assist in ensuring better coordination and more effective execution of infrastructure projects in Tobago. It consists of representatives from WASA, T&TEC, the Planning Department, Land Management Department, the Division of Health, Wellness and Family Development and the Trinidad and Tobago Contractors Association, as well as the Technical Support team of the Division of Infrastructure, Quarries and the Environment.
- 4.35 Madam Presiding Officer, some of the major infrastructure projects for the next fiscal year include:
- The rehabilitation of the Claude Noel Highway from Rockly Vale to Bacolet;
 - The widening of the Craig Hall River Bridge;
 - The construction of the Buccoo Bay Board Walk;
 - The extension of the Store Bay Local Road; and,
 - The upgrade works to the Turpin Bend in Charlotteville.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.36 We now turn our attention to education and human capital development.

g. Education and Human Capital Development

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.37 The importance of human capital to any society cannot be overstated and this Administration is fully cognizant of this fact. Over the last year, the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy undertook a number of initiatives aimed at developing our human capital at all levels of the education system in Tobago. Following the establishment of the Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) Unit in the Division in April of last year, teachers were given capacity building training in several areas, inclusive of leadership and teacher development. Additionally, as part of the annual school upgrade programme, all twelve (12) ECCE centres on the island were repaired and upgraded.
- 4.38 Moreover, as it relates to primary and secondary education, significant work was undertaken to improve the quality and delivery of education at both levels. Primary and secondary school teachers on the island were exposed to several capacity building training programmes, inclusive of leadership and school management, professional discipline, financial management and curriculum development and implementation. The Division of Education, Innovation and Energy also employed twelve (12) instructional coaches in literacy and numeracy to provide instructional and pedagogical support to principals, teachers and students at the primary level. In addition, all primary and secondary schools on the island were upgraded and repaired as part of the Annual School Repair Programme, at a cost of approximately \$13M. Further, expansion work on four (4) primary schools is nearing completion and these schools are expected to be available for the September 2018 School-Term. Madam Presiding Officer, the schools are the Hope Anglican, Patience Hill Government, Signal Hill Government and Whim Anglican. This expansion work is estimated to cost \$18.8M. Madam Presiding Officer, I am also pleased to announce this morning that work continues apace on the construction of the Scarborough R.C. School which is expected to be completed and opened in time



PHOTO AT TOP:

THE SCARBOROUGH ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL:

The Construction of the Scarborough RC School, at Mt. Marie, Lower Scarborough is nearing completion for the September 2018 school term. The school will provide a state of the art, modern education facility for many primary level students across the island.

PHOTO AT BOTTOM: BLENHEIM CONCRETE PRODUCTS WORKSHOP:

The production of concrete products at the Concrete Plant in Blenheim is set to increase as management seeks to secure commercial contracts with hardware stores, contractors, hoteliers and restaurateurs across the nation. Tradesmen of the Unemployment Relief Programme at the Blenheim workshop with potential business ventures can also capitalize on entrepreneurship training.

In photo: Ms. Crystal Benjamin adds final touches to a concrete pot made at the Blenheim workshop

for the September 2018 School-Term. This project is on-time and within budget at a cost of \$68M.

- 4.39 As it relates to post-secondary education, the Roxborough Trade Centre was upgraded and a Construction Skills Training Programme for persons between eighteen (18) and sixty (60) years was introduced. The programme is specially designed to increase the number of skilled tradesmen certified by the National Examinations Council (NEC) for employment in the construction sector. This programme is oversubscribed in the east and we intend to launch a similar programme in the west where it has generated widespread interest. It is envisaged that many of the graduates from these programmes will find ready employment in the construction sector.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.40 Over the next fiscal year, we will continue to work to improve the quality of education at all levels on the island. To ensure quality delivery of the curriculum, teachers at all levels of the education system in Tobago will be exposed to capacity building training. The opening of the Teachers' Professional Centre at Mardon House, is a significant step towards providing professional and personal development services to teachers in Tobago. These professional services support enhanced instructional delivery through the use of informational technology and the construction of authentic assessments. Personal development will be facilitated through planned retreats, workshops and seminars. These sessions will be implemented by local practitioners from within the school system as well as regional and international experts who will share best practices.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.41 We also propose to spend approximately \$15M to repair and upgrade all our schools on the island in the annual school repair programme. Greater attention will also be placed on the infrastructural needs of the School for the Deaf, Speech and Language Impaired as well as Happy Haven to bring them in line with acceptable international standards. A special committee is now in place to guide the process of transformation and capacity building at both schools. The Division of Education, Innovation and Energy will also partner with the Division of Health, Wellness and Family Development to provide



STUDENT COUNCIL PROGRAMME CREATING FUTURE LEADERS:

The Student Support Unit of the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy recently launched student councils at eight primary schools across Tobago. The initiative provided students with the opportunity to understand the management and operations of their schools. The Tablepiece Government Primary School was among the first to benefit from this pilot programme.

necessary support services which include, physiotherapy and speech and occupational therapy to improve and enhance the quality of life for students of both schools. We believe that all human beings have the capacity to learn and grow, that every child matters, and that students must be at the centre of the teaching and learning process.

- 4.42 The Division of Education, Innovation and Energy is also in discussions with the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) to introduce programmes that are relevant to Tobago's needs such as: Marine Sciences, Visual and Performing Arts, Agriculture, Clothing and Textile, Physical Education and Sport. It is hoped that UTT Tobago Campus can become the Centre for Visual and Performing Arts as well as for Marine Sciences.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.43 I now turn to housing opportunities.

h. Provision of Housing Opportunities

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.44 We know that the availability and quality of housing stock is a critical determinant of the living standards and quality of life citizens enjoy. Given the magnitude of financial resources required for home ownership and the imperfections in the existing housing market, it is difficult for many Tobagonians to finance the construction of new homes. The state therefore has a critical role to play in the provision of affordable housing for Tobagonians and we continue to work towards advancing this. Madam Presiding Officer, our ability to provide new homes in Tobago has been seriously constrained as a result of limited financial resources. However, this notwithstanding, we remain committed to treating with the existing mismatch between the demand and supply for public housing in Tobago. We are actively exploring the prospect of using a unique PPP-type arrangement to provide an estimated three hundred (300) new homes at Shirvan Estate. The land development phase should be completed by the end of this calendar year. We will also expedite development works at Courland and Belle Garden to allow persons who were granted lots at these sites to start construction activity in the quickest possible time. In addition, we will continue to support and encourage

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO TOBAGONIANS:

The Tobago House of Assembly continues to offer affordable housing for residents of Tobago.

In photo: Secretary of Settlements, Urban Renewal and Public Utilities,
Assemblyman Clarence Jacob making a presentation to a new home owner
during a recent housing distribution ceremony.



home ownership in Tobago through the Beneficiary Own Land Programme and the Home Construction Subsidy Programme.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.45 Over the last fiscal year, many Tobagonians benefitted from these programmes geared towards home ownership as well as improving the housing stock on the island. In this regard, in the last year, we distributed approximately two hundred (200) grants to the tune of \$1.5M under the Home Improvement Grant Programme and under the Home Construction Subsidy. Approximately fifty (50) Tobagonians received financial assistance totalling just under \$1M to assist them in the construction of their homes.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.46 I now turn my attention to healthcare and well-being.

i. Improving Healthcare and Well-Being

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.47 This Administration is cognisant of the fact that the quality of health care on the island has direct implications for the standard of living and quality of life of all Tobagonians and citizens resident in Tobago. Therefore, the provision of quality healthcare continues to be a priority for this Administration. Over the last year, a number of initiatives were undertaken to improve the provision of health care to Tobagonians inclusive of the following:

- The hosting of various clinics at our health centres on issues such as lifestyle diseases, child health, wound care, dialysis and kidney diseases;
- The hosting of Lamaze Classes as well as Nutrition Education Sessions for expectant mothers and their male partners to improve sexual and reproductive health of Tobagonians;
- The provision of auditory and visual examinations for first year students of all primary schools as well as the administering of vaccinations to all standard five students in Tobago;
- The recruitment of specialists in maxillofacial, paediatric surgery and orthopaedic surgery that has reduced the transfer of such cases to Trinidad; and,



HIV RAPID TESTING:

The Division of Health, Wellness and Family Development aims to deliver quality health care to the citizens of Tobago. In keeping with this mandate, the Division recently facilitated HIV Rapid Testing training for health care professionals of the Tobago Regional Health Authority. These practitioners are now equipped with the knowledge to effectively treat with the early detection of HIV which can delay the disease's progression to AIDS.

- The establishment of a Health and Wellness Centre for the management of stroke and diabetes.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.48 Building on the advances we have made with respect to health care over the last fiscal year, in the upcoming year we propose several initiatives and programmes all geared towards further improving the health and well-being of Tobago residents. In this context, we propose to intensify ongoing efforts to treat with the high incidences of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer and cerebrovascular disease on the island. In keeping with the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Plan 2017-2020, our strategy will focus on improved data management, as well as enhanced public awareness and early screening and detection with respect to these diseases. In an effort to expand our health infrastructure in Tobago, in the next fiscal year, we expect construction activity to proceed on the new Moriah Health Centre and the upgrade of the Roxborough Health Facility to the level of a District Health Facility to meet the needs of residents in Tobago East. We also propose the establishment of new Outpatient Clinics for the management of breast health, stroke and diabetes.
- 4.49 Other initiatives to improve the health and well-being of Tobago residents over the next fiscal year include:
- Ongoing upgrades to all health centres on the island;
 - Continuation of social protection programmes to protect vulnerable groups inclusive of women, children, the elderly and the differently abled;
 - Collaboration with Department of Advanced Training and Advisory Services (DATAS) in the Office of the Chief Secretary, for scholarships in specialized areas;
 - Installation of a laboratory at Signal Hill to enhance vector control services; and,
 - Improvements to the solid waste management facility at Studley Park.

HIV RAPID TESTING: TOBAGO ASSOCIATION OF THE ELDERLY: The elderly is an integral part of the Tobago's society and with our elderly population on the rise, this administration is taking steps to ensure that the physical, financial and social needs of this vulnerable group are met. In keeping with this initiative, the Division of Health, Wellness and Family Development recently established the Tobago Association of the Elderly which seeks to provide equal services and opportunities to enhance the quality of life and overall wellbeing of the island's senior citizens. In photo: Councillor, Dr. Agatha Carrington, Secretary of Health, Wellness and Family Development with elderly stakeholders and representatives from several regional and extra- regional organisations.



Madam Presiding Officer,

4.50 Let us turn our attention to sport and youth development.

j. Sport and Youth Development

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.51 This Administration is committed to the holistic development of young people in Tobago. Among the initiatives undertaken by the Division of Sport and Youth Affairs over the past fiscal year are:

- The provision of financial assistance to youth and sport organisations;
- The expansion of After School Programmes to support primary and secondary school students with remedial, research and study skills;
- The training programmes for young people in areas such as computer literacy, customer service, professional and specialized skills training;
- The hosting of the Tobago Youth Awards and THA Sport Awards to recognise youth achievement and excellence in a wide range of areas;
- The World of Work Programme for 5th and 6th forms students as well as post-secondary students to assist them in transitioning into the working environment; and,
- The provision of physical activity coaches to primary schools throughout the island.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.52 In the next fiscal year, the Division of Sport and Youth Affairs will continue to support the holistic development of young people through capacity building and financial assistance workshops. Among those initiatives carded for the upcoming year are:

- The Building Bridges Programme aimed at engaging youth in a regional exchange programme to expose them to youth work and youth related activities;
- The participation in the upcoming Caribbean Youth Summit and Commonwealth Youth Forum. This forum presents an opportunity for

DEVELOPING YOUTH THROUGH SPORT:

The Division of Sport and Youth Affairs continues to support initiatives such as the Primary School Football and Cricket Competitions which serve as a platform to identify and develop promising student athletes and contributes towards enhancing the physical fitness of Tobago's young adults.



exposure and networking among other Commonwealth delegates and the opportunity to plan various youth initiatives; and,

- The continued upgrades to sporting and recreational facilities throughout the island.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.53 Beyond the initiatives outlined under the Division of Sport and Youth Affairs, several other stratagems will be implemented in Divisions across the Assembly, all geared towards supporting our youth development thrust in Tobago.
- 4.54 Under the Division of Finance and the Economy, the Youth Energised for Success (YES) Programme will continue to provide their core programmes to assist in developing our young people. The YES programme also proposes to embark upon a new initiative called, ‘Empowering People through Innovation and Creativity’ (EPIC). EPIC targets persons between the ages of 18 and 35, allowing them to explore opportunities that are available in the non-traditional and creative industries such as television, film, photography, fashion, ICT, as well as modern and sustainable agricultural methods.
- 4.55 In addition, the Financial Literacy Secretariat proposes to partner with the National Financial Education Committee and Enterprise Hub to host a business camp called YOU-BIZ. Using an educational and interactive environment this initiative will introduce participants between the ages of fourteen (14) and eighteen (18), to the fundamentals of setting up a small business. The aim is to facilitate the development of tech-savvy youth entrepreneurs who can compete in a global environment.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.56 Please permit me to turn to the environment.

k. Protecting Our Pristine Natural Environment

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.57 This Administration recognises that one of our greatest assets as an island, is our pristine natural environment. As part of our strategy for sustainable



PRESERVING TOBAGO'S CULTURAL HERITAGE:

The baking of bread in the ole time "Dirt Oven" and the re-enactment of cultural practices have been iconic tourist attractions and notable symbols of Tobago's Heritage

development in Tobago, the Department of Environment continues to collaborate with the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) with respect to its Wetland Inventory and Monitoring Programme and its Coastal Zone Management Programme towards this goal. In addition, following the passage of a motion in this Honourable House to phase out the single-use of Styrofoam products in the food and beverage sector on the island in March last year, the Department continues to work with the civil society and the private sector to roll out this initiative.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.58 In the next fiscal year, this Administration proposes new measures aimed at preserving our natural environment. In this regard, the Executive Council recently approved the establishment of a Coastal Zone Management Unit within the Department of Environment to allow for more robust monitoring and analysis of coastal processes and the resultant impact on coastal morphology. We are keenly aware that Tobago has been experiencing significant challenges related to coastal erosion and sea level rise, largely induced by climate change. In fact, coastal erosion has severely damaged and continues to compromise the integrity of our road infrastructure and public institutions along the Milford Road, Grange Bay, Black Rock and Plymouth in the West, as well as areas such as Roxborough, Argyle and Kendal in the East. The proposed Unit will be responsible for the following:

- Developing a Coastal Zone Management Policy for Tobago;
- Conducting assessments with a view to providing updated qualitative and quantitative data on risk in the coastal zone using international best practices; and,
- Developing coastal infrastructure to mitigate coastal erosion, enhancing the resilience of coastal infrastructure, and improving the aesthetics and recreational opportunities offered to tourists and residents.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.59 The Unit will be tasked with the Rehabilitation of Pigeon Point, Grange Bay, and the wider Milford Road coastline through engineering interventions that are to be informed by a comprehensive coastal study.
- 4.60 Additionally, the Department of Environment will collaborate with the Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation in obtaining Blue Flag accreditation for selected beaches in Tobago. This requires the collection and analysis of data on water quality by an internationally certified laboratory, and the development of strategies to address any issues that may arise. Blue Flag accreditation will serve to enhance the island's tourism product and give the island additional tourism marketing options.

1. Community Empowerment

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.61 We now look at our initiatives to empower our communities.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.62 This Administration believes that sustainable development requires communities to play an integral role. As such, we recognise the empowerment of communities in Tobago as an essential element of our development strategy. Over the last few years, this Administration has invested significantly in our communities. In the last year alone, several facilities were upgraded or repaired, including the Bethel, Mt. Grace, Signal Hill, Castara and Parlatuvier Community Centres as well as Y-Zones in Speyside, Calder Hall, Mason Hall, Plymouth and Argyle.
- 4.63 Moreover, the Division of Community Development, Enterprise Development and Labour conducted several training programmes in areas such as vocational skills and entrepreneurship in about twenty-nine (29) communities throughout Tobago, targeting approximately two thousand and fifty (2,050) participants. Further, to assist in fostering entrepreneurship at the community level, the Division facilitated activities such as the Calder Hall Market Experience, the Parlatuvier and Environs Business Outreach Seminar and several Night Markets. Approximately one hundred and twenty-five (125) entrepreneurs participated in these community initiatives. In addition,



CELEBRATING THE ELDERLY:

As part of the Centenarian Awareness and Awards Programme (CAAP), the Division of Community Development, Enterprise Development and Labour celebrate and appreciate the elderly in Tobago, especially those attaining the milestone of 100 years and over.

through the IT Literacy and Walk-In Centres managed by Tobago Information Technology Limited, the Assembly continues to support computer literacy at the community levels with approximately five thousand seven hundred (5,700) persons utilising the Walk-In Centres and approximately one hundred (100) persons receiving training in computer literacy and the Microsoft Suite of products in the past year.

- 4.64 Programmes earmarked for implementation in the next fiscal year include the Community Literacy Improvement Plan (CLIP), the Social Cohesion and Mobilisation Programme (SCMP) and the Pride of Tobago Project.

m. Public Sector Modernisation

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.65 We now examine our efforts to modernise the public sector.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.66 We recognise that, there is an urgent need to modernise the public service not only in Tobago but also nationally, with a view to enhancing the capacity, efficiency and professionalism of the organisation. We propose to establish a Public Service Academy, modelled after the Canadian Academy, to provide ongoing training programmes for all public servants, to help them acquire the knowledge and develop the skills needed to be high-performing and innovative.

- 4.67 The effective transformation of the government system requires a training curriculum that focuses on myriad topics such as leadership and management techniques, information communication and technology (ICT), policy development and planning, procurement and governance. These are key areas identified as pertinent to combat the critical and growing issues within the Assembly and to foster a networked and interconnected organisation focused on maximizing results.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.68 In addition, the Academy will continuously provide training in three (3) core administrative areas which are: public sector orientation, specialised development, and management and leadership development. These are relevant areas of training for public servants and contracted employees to gain

an understanding of the values, ethics, culture and functions of the civil service and the importance of one's role in the organisation. Also, training of this kind is imperative to help new employees with no prior public sector experience to transition into the civil service.

- 4.69 The Academy will also host a wide range of seminars in critical areas such as risk management, change management, project management, lean business processes and crisis management. At these forums, employees can benefit from a deeper understanding of the role that the public sector plays in leveraging the progress of the island. The establishment of this Academy will benefit the Tobago House of Assembly holistically because of the emphasis on civic education, service oriented learning and leadership, all tailored to developing and advancing the economy of Tobago.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.70 In the first instance, we propose to use the Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute as the campus for this Academy.

Summary

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.71 The foregoing are the broad thematic areas which the fiscal package of the Assembly for 2019 will address. I remain eternally grateful for the many individuals, organisations and groups who assisted me in shaping the budgetary proposals of the Assembly.

5 The 2019 Expenditure Estimates

a. Recurrent Estimates and Highlights

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 5.1 I now present the expenditure estimates for 2019 beginning with the Recurrent Estimates.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 5.2 The Recurrent Estimates for fiscal 2019 totals \$3.2B. This can be disaggregated as follows:

▪ Personnel Expenditure	- -	\$ 901.2M,
▪ Goods and Services	- -	\$ 1.0B,
▪ Minor Equipment Purchases	- -	\$ 113.7M, and
▪ Transfers and Subsidies	- -	\$ 1.1B.

5.3 This represents an increase of \$40.7M from last year's request. The recurrent estimates by Division for fiscal 2019 are as follows:

▪ Assembly Legislature	- -	\$26.1M,
▪ Office of the Chief Secretary	- -	\$233.3M,
▪ Finance and the Economy	- -	\$264.4M,
▪ Tourism, Culture and Transportation	- -	\$381.1M,
▪ Education, Innovation and Energy	- -	\$486.6M,
▪ Community Development, Enterprise Development and Labour	- -	\$123.2M,
▪ Infrastructure, Quarries and the Environment	- -	\$522.3M,
▪ Food Production Forestry and Fisheries	- -	\$312.5M,
▪ Health, Wellness and Family Development	- -	\$756.3M,
▪ Settlements, Urban Renewal and Public Utilities	- -	\$35.4M, and
▪ Sport and Youth Affairs	- -	\$97.0M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.4 Some of the highlights in the recurrent expenditure for fiscal 2019 are:

▪ Tobago Regional Health Authority	- -	\$510.1M,
▪ Tobago Tourism Authority	- -	\$141.4M,
▪ School Feeding Programme	- -	\$50.0M,
▪ Information Technology Centre	- -	\$15.5M,
▪ Tobago Hospitality Tourism Institute	- -	\$15.0M,
▪ Assistance to Small Properties	- -	\$8.6M,
▪ Agricultural Incentive Programme	- -	\$4.0M,
▪ Grant to Necessitous Patients	- -	\$3.0M,
▪ Assistance to Cultural Groups	- -	\$2.5M,
▪ Assistance to Sporting Organisations	- -	\$2.0M,

- | | | |
|---|-----|-------------|
| ▪ Sport Development Programme | - - | \$2.0M, |
| ▪ Assistance to Sport Tourism Organisations | - - | \$2.0M, and |
| ▪ Tobago Agricultural Society | - - | \$2.0M. |

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.5 I now turn my attention to the Estimates for the Development Programme.

b. Development Programme Expenditure Estimates and Highlights

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.6 The estimates for the Development Programme for fiscal 2019 amount to \$1.38B, representing a decrease of \$328.4M from the Estimates of 2018. The Development Programmes Estimates are disaggregated as follows:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|---------------|
| ▪ Pre-Investment | - - | \$25M, |
| ▪ Productive Sectors | - - | \$15.5M, |
| ▪ Economic Infrastructure | - - | \$663.7M, |
| ▪ Social Infrastructure | - - | \$430.9M, and |
| ▪ Multi-sectoral and Other Services | - - | \$215.4M. |

5.7 To continue our diversification effort and to facilitate development of our local private sector, the estimates for our development programme will continue to provide support to the following companies and programmes:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ▪ Eco-Industrial Development Company of Tobago (E-IDCOT) | \$40.7M, |
| ▪ The Business Incubator Programme | \$10.1M, |
| ▪ The Milford Road Esplanade Phase II | \$6.0M, |
| ▪ Enterprise Development Grant Programme | \$6.0M, and |
| ▪ Venture Capital Equity Fund Limited (VCEFL) | \$4.0M. |

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.8 Given the importance of tourism to the Tobago economy, the 2019 Estimates will provide for:

- Infrastructural Works at Pigeon Point \$9.1M,
- Upgrade Works at Manta Lodge \$8.3M,
- Lure Wildlife Nature Park \$7.5M,
- Construction of the Fort King George
Heritage Park Project Phase III \$6.4M,
- Construction of Beach Facilities at Englishman's Bay \$2.0M, and
- Construction of Cruise Ship Berths \$2.0M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.9 The agriculture sector revitalization will remain a priority for this Administration in 2019. As such, the Estimates cater for:

- The Agricultural Access Roads Programme \$55.0M,
- The Establishment of Agro-processing Facilities \$11.5M,
- The Improvement to Beaches and Landing Facilities \$10.0M,
- The Goldsborough Estate Irrigation Project \$8.5M,
- The Development of an Agro-Park at Friendship Estate \$5.0M, and
- The Comprehensive State Land Development \$4.0M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.10 Support for education is also a primary area of focus. The Development Programme Estimates make provision for the support of educational programmes and the improvement of facilities. We have therefore budgeted for:

- Improvements to Primary Schools \$20.0M,
- Establishment of a Tobago Science Research Centre \$7.0M,
- Establishment of Early Childhood Care Centres \$5.0M,
- Seamless Education Programme \$5.0M,
- Establishment of Visual Arts and Performance
Theatres (VAPT) in Primary Schools \$3.0M,
- Upgrade to Happy Haven School \$2.5M,
- Construction of the School for the Deaf, Speech and
Language Impaired \$2.5M, and
- Upgrade of the Roxborough Trade Centre \$1.5M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.11 In fiscal 2019, we have provisioned for an accelerated public housing programme. Accordingly, our development programme estimates provide for:

▪ Courland Estate Land Development	\$26.0M,
▪ Shirvan Road Land Development	\$18.0M,
▪ Adelphi Estate	\$15.8M,
▪ Home Improvement Grant, Tobago	\$10.0M,
▪ Development of Belle Garden Estate Phase II	\$7.2M,
▪ Adventure Estate Plymouth Road	\$3.0M, and
▪ Home Improvement Subsidy	\$2.0M.

5.12 We will continue to upgrade and even expand our road and other physical infrastructure. The 2019 Estimates provide for:

▪ An Expanded Road Resurfacing Programme	\$50.0M,
▪ Major Improvement Works to Secondary Roads	\$40.0M,
▪ Rehabilitation of the Claude Noel Highway	\$27.0M,
▪ Coastal Zone Protection Programme	\$25.0M,
▪ Construction of Milford Road Bridges	\$25.0M,
▪ Windward Road Special Development Programme	\$18.0M,
▪ Construction of the Milford Road Bypass to Smithfield	\$15.0M,
▪ Construction of the ANR Robinson International Airport Boulevard	\$15.0M,
▪ Construction of Sea Defense Walls	\$15.0M,
▪ Milford Road Coastal Protection Programme	\$10.0M,
▪ Construction of Canaan/Bon Accord Connector Drain	\$8.0M,
▪ Erection of Roxborough/Bloody Bay Retaining Wall	\$7.5M,
▪ Improvement works to Plymouth/Arnos Vale Road	\$6.0M, and
▪ Mt. Pleasant/Lowlands Drainage System	\$5.0M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.13 Going forward, this is just a snapshot of the activities we will undertake under the Development Programme. Since these projects and programmes are

widely dispersed across the island the economic benefits will certainly diffuse throughout all communities.

c. Other Estimates

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 5.14 The only other estimates to be included for fiscal 2019 are provisions for URP and CEPEP, \$70.0 M and \$54.1 M respectively.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 5.15 Within recent times both URP and CEPEP programmes were significantly restructured. In fact, the Executive Council approved a new strategic plan for CEPEP while URP formulated a new policy framework to guide its operations for the period, 2018-2020. Both programmes were restructured to concentrate on skills training and enabling employees to gain certification for competencies acquired. The restructuring also took into consideration increasing revenue generating activities as well as support for the agriculture sector.

6 Financing the 2019 Expenditure Estimates

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.1 For fiscal 2019, the estimates of revenue, both tax and non-tax, are as follows:

1.	Taxes on Income and Profits	- -	\$143.5M,
2.	Taxes on Property	- -	\$ 0.6M,
3.	Taxes on Goods and Services	- -	\$ 58.4M,
4.	Taxes on International Trade	- -	\$ 2.5M,
5.	Other Taxes	- -	\$ 5.2M,
	Total Tax Revenue	- -	\$ 210.3M,
6.	Property Income Taxes	- -	\$ 0.1M,
7.	Other Non-tax Revenue	- -	\$ 0.6M,
	Total Non-Tax Revenue	- -	\$ 0.7M, and
	Total Revenue	- -	\$ 211.1M.

a. Assembly Revenues

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.2 Although the current revenue collections in Tobago do not match the expenditure, this is in no way a true reflection of the value of Tobago's real contribution to the national economy. What is not considered here, are revenues generated from activities related to the exploration and production of energy resources in the marine space around the island of Tobago. This is one of the central issues in the legislation for internal Self-Government.

- 6.3 It is also the case that current revenue collections in Tobago do not include taxes, fees, duties and levies of companies and financial institutions in respect of their Tobago operations since these are currently paid centrally in Trinidad by their head offices, contrary to Section 49 (2) of Act 40 of 1996.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.4 Current revenue collections do not include the taxes paid by many Tobagonians who on almost a daily basis conduct business in Trinidad. For example, there are many Tobagonians who import motor vehicles and other goods via companies in Trinidad--the taxes they pay on the importation of these items are collected nationally. Madam Presiding Officer, all these issues related to tax collection in Tobago are addressed in the new legislation for Self-Government.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.5 The Assembly continues to place a high priority on revenue generating projects. In this context, I am happy to report that the Studley Park Enterprise Limited has improved the efficiency and productivity of the Quarry.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.6 Discussions are ongoing with various financial institutions as the Tobago House of Assembly explores alternative financing mechanisms such as bond financing to fund its development agenda for the island. A policy decision has been taken to obtain financing from the domestic market. From our recent discussions, feedback has been very positive. As we seek to raise additional funding, the THA will strengthen its institutional arrangements to enable

effective debt management and will ensure that our borrowing programmes receive the support of the Minister of Finance. In the upcoming fiscal year, in its ongoing efforts to accelerate Tobago's development thrust, the Assembly proposes to raise funds via a bond issue.

b. Collaboration with International Agencies

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.7 At the beginning of this administrative term a concerted effort was made to increase collaboration with our multilateral partners and other key stakeholders in the financial sector and diplomatic community, to leverage their expertise for improved operational efficiency and financial support. Several of these initiatives are well under way and new opportunities are continuously being sought through these partnerships.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.8 The current economic challenges compel us to take a more strategic approach to the way we conduct business. In the words of the Honourable Chief Secretary it is "Business as Unusual". In Fiscal 2019, the Assembly is to be included in a pilot programme facilitated by an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) loan to modernise the national accounting systems through the adoption of a new Public Financial Management (PFM) framework. This Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) would include business process reengineering for budget preparation and execution, completing the migration to accrual accounting as per International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and the design and implementation of an Internal Audit (IA) framework to improve transparency and reporting.
- 6.9 In this regard, over the next fiscal year the Assembly will also take steps to adopt a Multi-Term Budgeting Framework (MTBF) which will prioritize, allocate and manage the resources of the Assembly and the policy directives that drive the allocation of revenue and expenditure over the medium term up to five (5) years. This new approach will bring the budget analysis, decision making and expenditure under control earlier in the cycle, since decisions made today will influence the annual budgets over the next three (3) to four (4) years.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.10 Adopting a Multi-Term Budgeting Framework will allow the Assembly to achieve expenditure efficiency and inclusive growth, and will protect priority spending while delaying other non-priority spending when resources are constrained. It will also encourage a more strategic approach to resource allocation and more efficient planning over the medium term. Through our participation the Assembly will be able to effectively coordinate a programme of results-based management, underpinned by real time monitoring and evaluation of measurable indicators, all geared towards sound fiscal management.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.11 Over the course of Fiscal 2019, as we pursue the results based management approach, the Assembly will work with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Ministry of Planning and Development to address a key factor in performance management - the implementation deficit. The CDB, along with many other stakeholders, has identified the delivery of effective development outcomes as one of the biggest challenges currently facing policymakers and practitioners across the region. They have sought to address this by providing a platform for practitioners to share best practices to enhance the efficiency and performance of the public sector. This Assembly intends to adopt a new performance management framework that includes practical tools, techniques and innovative concepts to enhance performance and improve coordination and service delivery across an array of strategic areas.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.12 One such area is the commissioning of a Tobago Infrastructure Investment Strategy (TIIS) and associated medium term Tobago Infrastructure Plans (TIPs). The Executive Council has approved the development of this initiative to inform the island's spatial development strategy, and foster a more integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment. Moreover, the development of such a capital investment strategy will not only define Tobago's infrastructure priorities, but also provide a transparent, coordinated and unified approach to investment and procurement. The intended result is the development of a comprehensive and viable project pipeline for both publicly

initiated and unsolicited proposals, ultimately ensuring better value for money.

- 6.13 The TIIS will be driven by a Multi-Sectoral Committee whose role will be to plan for and satisfy the future infrastructural needs. The core committee will be led by the Investment and Public Private Partnership (IP3) Unit in the Division of Finance and the Economy, and will comprise planners, engineers, project managers, technical staff, representatives of the utilities and environmental agencies, as well as financial and economic analysts and social scientists. This will ensure that a representative cross-section of multi-sectoral decision makers are appointed and will present the opportunity to capitalise on linkages between Divisions, Departments and Agencies (DDAs). The TIIS will also include representation from the private sector, civil society and secure bipartisan support where necessary.
- 6.14 As the TIIS is fundamentally aligned with elements of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative (ESCI) and the institutional development component of the 'Neighbourhood Upgrading and Revitalization Programme', the Multi-Sectoral Committee, through the IP3 Unit, will leverage technical support from the relevant IDB Groups, to assist the Assembly to become sufficiently equipped to undertake the task of strategic programming and prioritizing, developing not only policy recommendations, but also an action plan for comprehensive investment planning. This is just one facet of our larger Public Private Partnership (PPP) Policy Framework.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.15 Through the support of the IDB, CDB and the Canadian High Commission, we have developed a robust framework to advance viable candidate projects for execution via the PPP modality. This framework will be published on the websites of the Assembly and the Division of Finance and the Economy over the next few weeks and will be underpinned by a series of stakeholder sensitization sessions. It will be in the best interest of all stakeholders that they participate in these information sessions so that they will be best positioned to qualify for upcoming opportunities.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.16 The Assembly has also continued its discussions with the CDB and IDB on alternative financing for infrastructure projects with significant environmental impact such as the Coastal Protection Programme for the stabilization of Milford Road, Grange Bay, coastal erosion mitigation and protection at Pigeon Point, and relocation of the Scarborough Secondary School.

7 Some Ongoing Political Economy Issues

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.1 Before I conclude, I wish to take this opportunity to address a few critical socio-economic issues affecting Tobago which will have long term development implications for the island.

a. Inter-Island Transportation System

- 7.2 The first issue is that of the inter-island transportation system. The inter-island transportation system provides critical support particularly to the tourism and agriculture sectors. Over the last year, the Inter-Island Transportation System has been a major cause of concern for Tobagonians. Its impact is far reaching and includes not only the business community but the wider Tobago and Trinidad population. In this regard, let me take this opportunity to publicly thank Tobagonians for their patience while we seek to find a sustainable solution. Although things have improved significantly, our objective is to ensure that Tobagonians and visitors alike can travel between the islands in a dignified manner.
- 7.3 In this regard, we are currently in discussions with consultants to conduct a study on the inter-island transportation system; examining policy, planning and operational issues including the evaluation of the management structures and the possibility of alternative arrangements for improved travel. Madam Presiding Officer, I am also heartened by news from the Prime Minister's recent visit to Australia resulting in the acquisition of two fast ferries for Tobago. These vessels, together with the Galleon Passage, will replace the aging fleet and minimise the current challenges on the sea bridge.

b. Crime and Security

- 7.4 The second issue is that of crime and security, an issue which this Administration, continues to treat with seriously. Accordingly, there are ongoing collaborations between the Assembly and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to maximise our efforts towards fighting crime on the island. As a result of these discussions, over the last year, twenty (20) additional police officers were assigned to Tobago to assist with crime fighting on the island.
- 7.5 In addition, the Tobago House of Assembly has collaborated with the Ministry of National Security on a new initiative titled, the 'National Crime Prevention Programme' (NCP) and an Assembly led Working Group, was created to coordinate the Tobago community crime prevention strategy.

c. Self- Government

- 7.6 The third issue is that of Self-Government for Tobago. Madam Presiding Officer, the issue of Self-Government for Tobago has been a longstanding and thorny issue with significant development implications for all citizens in Tobago and Trinidad. The prospects for financing Tobago's development are significant. I am happy that after years of consultations, debates and arguments, we are now much closer to achieving the seemingly elusive goal of Self-Government for our island. I am pleased that the Bill is now before a Joint Select Committee, and I hope that the Committee can complete its work in the shortest possible time to pave the way for the process to move forward. Madam Presiding Officer, it is hoped that when the Bill is placed before Parliament for debate, our friends in opposition would see beyond narrow partisan politics and would also encourage their colleagues in Trinidad to support the Bill. Madam Presiding Officer, there are some issues that transcend party politics, the issue of Self-Government for Tobago is one of them. Self-Government goes far beyond party preference, it centres on the development of Tobago and its people. Therefore, I continue to urge all of Tobago to get involved and let us increase the momentum until we achieve Self-Government for Tobago.

d. Collaborations between the THA and Central Government

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.7 The fourth issue I wish to address relates to ongoing collaborations between the THA and the Central Government. The THA and the Central Government continue to work together on a number of major projects geared towards this island's development.
- 7.8 Madam Presiding Officer, one such project is the construction of the Old Grange and Roxborough police stations. The Old Grange Police Station is 50 per cent complete with an anticipated completion date in November 2018. The Roxborough Police Station is about 23 per cent complete with an expected completion date in April 2019.
- 7.9 Another project is the construction of the new terminal for the ANR Robinson International Airport at Crown Point. The THA continues to collaborate with Central Government on this undertaking given its critical role in the expansion of long term viability for the Tobago tourism sector. The estimated cost of construction of the new terminal is \$500M.
- 7.10 Also, Madam Presiding Officer, other major works to be undertaken in collaboration with the Central Government include the construction of a marina in Tobago. This marina has the potential to enhance tourism spend and positively impact the island's development.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.11 Last but not least, the THA continues to join forces with the Central Government regarding the construction of Sandals and Beaches Resorts. This venture would assist in addressing the existing problem of the shortage of high quality rooms on the island. It is estimated that Tobago has a room stock gap of approximately two thousand five hundred (2,500) rooms. This project also has the potential to change the socio-economic landscape of Tobago. For instance, the presence of a Sandals Resort on the island would undoubtedly enhance the marketability of Tobago as a premier destination. It would also provide possibilities of increased airlift to Tobago out of the North American markets, as is currently being experienced by our Caribbean neighbours. Therefore, there is much to be gained through this Sandals and Beaches

initiative, as it will not only promote the island, but also contribute to our national diversification efforts.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.12 It is incumbent on us to prepare adequately to optimise the benefits to be derived from this project. The agriculture sector for example, must be prepared so that they can ramp up production to accommodate the anticipated demand. Our citizens also need to be ready to meet the standards of excellence and customer service that would undoubtedly be demanded by these hotels.
- 7.13 As a responsible body, the Assembly understands that the proposed location is environmentally sensitive. Therefore, we will ensure that we will work with Central Government to provide adequate care and attention to protect our pristine natural environment. I want to give Tobagonians the assurance that this Administration is committed to ensuring that there will be no injury to the environment. We will also ensure that Tobago derives optimal benefits from these discussions.

e. New Tobago Development Plan

- 7.14 The final issue I wish to address is that of a development plan for the island. The Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (CEDP) 2.0 was the roadmap that guided our development for the period 2013-2017. This was the second iteration and the planning horizon for this document has now elapsed. There is an urgent need for us to engage in developing a new planning framework for the island. This process has already begun.

8 Conclusion

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 8.1 As I bring today's presentation to a close, once again let me give the people of Tobago the assurance that this Administration remains committed to the continued development of Tobago. We are cognizant of the fact that the road ahead will not be easy, but we are confident that if we work together, we can overcome whatever challenges we face as an island. Madam Presiding Officer, the qualities of thrift, industriousness, tenacity, resilience and honesty for

which we as Tobagonians have been known, are the same qualities that we need to take us through these difficult times.

- 8.2 Today's budget is being presented against the backdrop of challenging, but not insurmountable economic and social issues facing our twin island state, and we all have a duty to assist our country to overcome these challenges. It is therefore imperative that we all recognise that the decisions we make today and the postures and attitudes we adopt will have consequences for better or worse, over the medium to long term. We must all commit to work together to make our country a better place. I have every confidence that if we do, our nation will emerge from its economic and social challenges stronger and more resilient, thus creating a better place for our children and grandchildren.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 8.3 As I indicated earlier, we have an audacious, yet achievable development programme planned for our island. We also have visionary and insightful leadership. The onus is on all of us to work together in the interest of our island and our country. Fortunately for us, through ongoing collaborations with the Central Government, there are a number of important projects that can transform the social and economic landscape of Tobago. As Tobagonians, we must ready ourselves to capitalize on these opportunities, as this is the only way we can ensure we derive optimal benefit from the burgeoning transformation Tobago is poised to experience.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 8.4 This has been an auspicious morning and so, on behalf of the Chief Secretary, all the Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the THA, I most wholeheartedly thank the audience within the Chamber and the wider listening public, for their time and attention. May God continue to bless you and bless the people of Tobago and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

- 8.5 Madam Presiding Officer, I beg to move.



TOBAGO ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS OUTLOOK CONFERENCE & YOUTH FORUM:

The Tobago Economic and Business Outlook Conference and the Youth Empowerment Forum are main highlights of the Division of Finance & the Economy's annual "Finance Week" activities. The conference is designed to allow industry experts to critically examine the island's economy and present viable solutions for implementation and development while the Youth Forum introduces the island's young men and women to opportunities in the world of business enterprise.



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