



# 2020 BUDGET STATEMENT

*"Advancing Our Development Agenda"*

**ASSEMBLYMAN JOEL JACK**

DEPUTY CHIEF SECRETARY AND  
SECRETARY OF THE DIVISION OF  
FINANCE AND THE ECONOMY

24 JUNE 2019











# **BUDGET STATEMENT FOR FISCAL 2020**

## **Advancing Our Development Agenda**

- Accelerating Economic Growth and Promoting Diversification
- Creating Jobs and Enhancing Productivity
- Fostering Innovation and Creativity
- Education and Human Capital Development
- Tourism Sector Development
- Expanding Food Production
- Development of the Co-operative Sector
- Improving Healthcare and Wellness
- Housing Opportunities
- Holistic Development of Young People
- Infrastructure and Infrastructure Strategy
- Environmental Sustainability
- Crime and Safety
- Community Empowerment

**Presented By:**  
**Assemblyman Joel Jack**  
**Deputy Chief Secretary & Secretary of Finance and the Economy**  
**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019**



## Table of Contents

1	Introductory Remarks .....	1
2	Global, Regional and National Context .....	4
3	Review of Recent Financial and Budgetary Developments .....	7
4	Update on Existing Developmental Initiatives and New Priorities for Fiscal 2020 .....	10
5	The 2020 Expenditure Estimates .....	35
6	Financing the 2020 Expenditure Estimates.....	39
7	Collaborations with Central Government .....	41
8	Conclusion.....	43





## **ADVANCING OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

### **1 Introductory Remarks**

Madam Presiding Officer,

Honourable Chief Secretary,

Secretaries,

Assistant Secretaries,

Minority Leader and other Members of the House of Assembly,

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 This morning, in accordance with Section 41(1) of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) Act 40 of 1996, it is a distinct honour to be afforded the opportunity to stand before this Honourable House, to present the Draft Estimates of the Tobago House of Assembly for fiscal 2020. I am pleased to inform you that today's submission to this Honourable House represents the combined efforts of many individuals and groups within the Assembly and the wider Tobago community. Please permit me to extend my profound gratitude to the Chief Secretary, all Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries, and staff of the various Divisions who tirelessly and selflessly contributed to the development of this presentation. I also wish to extend special commendation to the staff of the Division of Finance and the Economy and the staff in the Planning Department in the Office of the Chief Secretary. My appreciation extends as well to the non-governmental, community-based and youth organisations, individuals, and the participants in the THA Pre-Budget Survey for 2019, whose numerous suggestions have assisted us in shaping some of the budgetary priorities, which I will present later. I would also like to thank my spouse and family for their dedicated support at all times. Above all, I thank



Almighty God for his continued guidance 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 Tobago is now at a critical juncture and a strategic inflection point in its development. Our fiduciary responsibility is to chart a course which would take our development to another level, and in the direction best suited to the needs and aspirations of our people. Madam Presiding Officer, successive Administrations of the Assembly have never engaged in setting policy purely by expediency. We understand of course, that exogenous factors arise to which we must respond. But, this response must be the rudder to guide us back on the course we have charted, or to make a mid-course correction if the changes in the environment are dynamic enough to cause us to recalibrate. We cannot and will not function like a cork in the ocean, buffeted by the prevailing tides and currents.
- 1.3 This is why, Madam Presiding Officer, we have in the past, developed Comprehensive Economic Development Plans which articulated our challenges and guided us in steering the economy and society of Tobago. Those objectives, encapsulated in the phrase – *‘Clean, Green, Safe and Serene’* – remain valid, even if now we must redefine and refresh the initiatives which will take us there.
- 1.4 The Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (CEDP) 2.0 spanned the period 2013 to 2017, and over the course of the next few months we will be undertaking a detailed review of the CEDP 2.0 to lay the platform for another long-term plan. We are conscious that the global economy is evolving rapidly. We are witnessing the Fourth Industrial Revolution driven by Artificial Intelligence, 5G communications technologies and developments in biotechnology. We are also witnessing emergent concerns about data privacy, access to information, the acceleration of climate change, and the expectations of citizens for involvement in the decisions which affect their lives. Therefore, there is need for a fundamental rethink and recalibration of our course as a result of these megatrends.
- 1.5 In the interim however, this Administration was not complacent; we embarked on three (3) related initiatives which will lay significant parts of the foundation for a development plan that will take us to 2030. The first initiative is the



preparation for Tobago's autonomy in the context of the proposed Constitution Amendment Bill, which is now before a Joint Select Committee of Parliament. The second is the Tobago Infrastructure Investment Strategy. These are discussed in detail later on in my presentation.

- 1.6 The third initiative is the Draft Medium-Term Policy and Planning Framework (MTPPF) 2019-2023. The Assembly, through the Division of Finance and the Economy, has prepared a Draft Medium-Term Policy and Planning Framework which is intended to focus our efforts related to our development agenda, and to guide development expenditure in our Budgets over the next few years. The Draft Medium-Term Policy and Planning Framework will be used to engage stakeholders regarding key initiatives we will be pursuing in respect of Tourism, as the sector which will catalyse development in the economy of Tobago as a whole. It also addresses key development challenges in respect of Development Control and Use of Land, Transportation, including the air and sea bridges, Energy Efficiency and Human Capital Development. The focused development agenda for the medium term is mindful of the limited resources available to the Assembly in a time of national economic stringency. But, even in focusing on certain key areas, the implementation of the Medium-Term Policy and Planning Framework will stimulate economic activity and growth throughout the economy of Tobago.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 1.7 It is against this backdrop, and consistent with our commitment to development planning, that this Administration has developed a Draft Medium-Term Policy and Planning Framework to guide the island's development over the next four (4) years and take us to the next level. Accordingly, today's budget is aptly themed, "Advancing Our Development Agenda".

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 1.8 Today's fiscal package will be presented in a structured manner. I will proceed with a review of international, regional and national economic developments. This will be followed by a brief examination of the Assembly's financial and budgetary position over the past year. I will then provide the rationale for our budget numbers by reviewing some of our past achievements, before



presenting our budgetary priorities for the fiscal 2020 Budget. This will be followed by the presentation of the budget numbers for fiscal 2020, and the proposed financing mechanism. I will then highlight some ongoing collaborations we are having with the Central Government and thereafter, conclude the presentation.

## **2 Global, Regional and National Context**

### ***a. International and Regional Economy***

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.1 I will begin, by framing our review of the performance of the Tobago economy and its near-term outlook in the context of the evolving global economy. If we were to summarise the state of today's global economy in one word, it would be 'uncertainty'. There are multiple factors, economic as well as geo-political, which have heightened this uncertainty. First, decisions made on the matters of trade by the United States have escalated tensions with China, as well as Mexico, Canada and Europe, prompting retaliatory actions from these countries. What some have characterised as 'trade wars', have led businesses in key sectors, such as automobiles, consumer staples, information technology and agricultural products, to reassess where they are likely to locate their production facilities, how much labour they should employ, and how they should price their goods.
- 2.2 Second, the uncertainty engendered by Brexit which remains unresolved for the past three (3) years and looks set to continue until year's end and beyond. In addition, the gains made by populist parties in recent national and European Parliamentary elections, have also left businesses confused as to where to locate their headquarters, and what policies will emerge from the European Union (EU) over the next several years.
- 2.3 Third, tensions and conflicts in Venezuela (which are affecting us directly in Trinidad and Tobago), Iran, North Korea, and Syria, have further exacerbated the already tenuous issue of large-scale migrations caused by civil war and political repression.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.4 These uncertainties are manifested in the volatility of the major stock market indices over the last year, the decline in bond yields, and the incipient inversion of the yield curve, as investors are unsure of market direction and are looking for a safe haven while simultaneously seeking to maximise the yields on their portfolios.
- 2.5 As a consequence, in April of this year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut its global growth forecast for 2019 from 3.5 per cent to 3.3 per cent, reducing the growth rate projections for economies in the EU and Japan. As recently as last week, the Federal Reserve in the United States indicated that it was open to cutting interest rates whereas one (1) year ago, there were indications that the Fed would be raising rates in 2019. The outlook for emerging market economies is now weaker than previously anticipated.
- 2.6 However, within the region, the economy of Jamaica is beginning to make tremendous strides as it emerges stronger and more resilient from the strictures of a prolonged IMF programme. It has reduced its debt-GDP ratio dramatically, it is promoting investment in several areas, and while growth is still relatively low, the economy is improving and confidence is returning. Similarly, Barbados is now under an IMF programme resulting in the restructuring of its domestic debt and extensive revision of its development agenda, including a radical change to its income tax regime. By contrast, Venezuela descended into chaos due to its internal political impasse, while its oil production, once the boon of the economy, plummets to dismal lows. Venezuela's more pressing concern is that of the migration of large numbers of its citizens to neighbouring countries, including Trinidad and Tobago.
- 2.7 While crude oil prices have recovered from the lows of 2016 and 2017, they have not returned to the levels of the period 2010 to 2015, following the global financial crisis and the Great Recession, when oil prices averaged over US\$100/barrel. Similarly, the benchmark Henry Hub price for natural gas has fallen below US\$3.00/MMBtu in 2019. Natural gas prices in Europe have continued to fall, while prices in the Japanese market have also declined, but remain at over US\$10/MMBtu in 2019. Weaker growth in the global economy is likely to mean softer prices for both oil and natural gas, although these prices could spike in the event of geo-political events, particularly in the Middle East.



***b. National Economy***

- 2.8 In Trinidad and Tobago, according to the latest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates available from the Central Statistical Office (CSO), growth for the first three quarters of 2018 was driven primarily by increased production of natural gas. In the first quarter of 2018 output grew by 0.9 per cent, followed by growth of 2.1 per cent in the second quarter and 1.5 per cent in the third quarter. These three (3) consecutive quarters of positive growth are an encouraging sign that the national economy is no longer contracting. As indicated by the Minister of Finance and the Economy in his mid-Year Budget Review, the production of natural gas increased in 2018 to an average of 3.63 billion standard cubic feet (bcf) per day, which represents an 8 per cent increase over the 2017 average of 3.36 bcf per day. Further, gas production continues to increase and is expected to reach an average of 3.8 bcf per day in 2019. Indeed, production is already averaging 3.81 bcf per day in the first quarter of 2019. Oil production, which is now relatively stable, is expected to increase in the next three (3) to four (4) years based on the Exploration and Production (E&P) strategies of the newly established Heritage Petroleum Company and the proposed activities of other local independent oil producers.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.9 The rate of inflation remains subdued. Latest figures from the Central Bank indicate that the country recorded a headline inflation of 1.5 per cent, food price inflation of 1 per cent and core inflation of 1.6 per cent. These represent some of the lowest inflation rates for Trinidad and Tobago in decades. In respect of the labour market, the data indicate a modest 4.4 per cent unemployment rate as at the fourth quarter of 2017. No data are available for 2018.

***c. Tobago Economy***

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.10 The most recent Survey of Business Establishments conducted by the Division of Finance and the Economy for Tobago, indicate that Tobago's GDP at constant prices fell from \$1.75 billion in 2017 to \$1.74 billion in 2018, a marginal decline of 0.3 per cent. The data indicate that the share of general

government activity in Tobago's GDP was about 46 per cent in 2018, and the share of Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services sector 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 13 per cent of Tobago's GDP in 2018. Further, the data show that the share of Transport, Storage and Communications was about 6 per cent of Tobago's GDP in 2018.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.11 The most recent labour market data from the CSO suggest that unemployment in Tobago for the fourth quarter of 2017 was approximately 2.2 per cent, down from the 4 per cent recorded in the comparative period in 2016. The data indicate that in the fourth quarter of 2017, approximately 57 per cent of persons with jobs in Tobago were employed in the state sector, with the private sector employing approximately 43 per cent. Madam Presiding Officer, the latest data on prices available from the Central Bank suggest that Tobago recorded headline and food price inflation in March 2019 of approximately 2.4 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively. For the twelve (12) month period ending March 2018, Tobago's headline and food price inflation rates averaged 1.6 per cent and 2.4 per cent, respectively.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 2.12 Please permit me to examine some recent financial and budgetary developments as they relate to the THA.

### **3 Review of Recent Financial and Budgetary Developments**

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.1 In the financial year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, the Assembly received a total of **\$2,058,304,245** from the Central Government. The sum of **\$1,722,621,245** was received for Recurrent Expenditure and **\$335,683,000** was received for Development Programme Expenditure. The sum of **\$204,725,247** 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 2018 to **\$2,263,029,492**.



- 3.2 For fiscal 2018, Recurrent and Development Programme Expenditure by the Assembly amounted to **\$2,039,049,724**. Of this sum, Recurrent Expenditure amounted to **\$1,698,425,811**, while Development Programme Expenditure amounted to **\$340,623,913**.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.3 At the end of fiscal 2017, unspent balances amounting to **\$81,101,756** were transferred to the Contingencies Account and used in fiscal 2018, 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 Construction of the Roxborough Administrative Complex--\$24.8 million; the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP)--\$17.7 million; the Community Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP)--\$14.7 million; the School Expansion Programme--\$3.9 million; and, Human Capital Development--\$1.92 million.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.4 For fiscal 2019, the total budgetary allocation to the Assembly amounted to \$2.21 billion; disaggregated, \$1.9 billion was allocated for Recurrent Expenditure and \$231.6 million was allocated for Development Programme Expenditure.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.5 The THA is in possession of a stand-alone credit rating from Moody's Rating Agency. Our rating is currently Ba1, stable, the same level as the sovereign. The Assembly's rating is reviewed annually and this exercise will continue during the next fiscal year; and together with the annual IMF Article IV Consultation, will form part of the THA's annual review process by international agencies.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.6 You may recall my commitment early in my term of office, to modernise the Assembly's accounting framework and financial architecture. At this time, I am pleased to update this Honourable House on our advances.

- 3.7 The first step commenced with the introduction of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), for the preparation, presentation and reporting of the financial affairs of the Assembly. It was decided that this adoption would be done on a phased basis commencing with the IPSAS Cash Basis and systematically transitioning to the IPSAS Accrual Basis. Adoption of IPSAS will not only facilitate the implementation of an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), but it will also improve the management and financial reporting framework of the Assembly, allow for informed assessment and decision making in relation to resource allocation, and provide for greater accountability and transparency. It must also be noted that the Assembly is currently preparing and presenting its Financial Statement in accordance with IPSAS Cash Basis.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.8 The Division of Finance and the Economy continues to advance the use of the Automated Clearing House (ACH); and all Divisions have since adopted the ACH system for payroll processing. The next iteration will focus on facilitating payments to suppliers throughout the Assembly using this system in three (3) phases. Phase One (1) will include payments to utility companies; Phase Two (2) will formalize payments for contractual obligations, such as security, janitorial and other services; and Phase Three (3) will initiate payments to suppliers engaged via Purchase Orders. In fact, Madam Presiding Officer, Phase One (1) of this process is already well in train with Phase Two (2) to commence in the first quarter of fiscal 2020 and Phase Three (3), in the second quarter of fiscal 2020.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.9 In my 2019 Budget Statement, I also indicated that the Assembly will participate in a pilot programme in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Ministry of Finance to modernise the national accounting systems, through the adoption of a new Public Financial Management (PFM) framework and an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS). These initiatives will result in a significant improvement in efficiency, by allowing for real-time access and reporting on



the Assembly's financial and accounting operations, which will improve the budgeting, planning and decision making processes.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.10 FreeBalance, a Canadian company, was selected as the preferred vendor for the national implementation of IFMIS. The existing business processes of the Assembly for budget preparation, payment management and revenue management were reviewed and the process flows mapped; further assessments will be undertaken to enhance efficiency. The IFMIS is scheduled to be fully operational in the second quarter of fiscal 2020, with the conclusion of the pilot exercise in the third quarter of fiscal 2020. The Assembly's Budget Estimates for fiscal 2021 will be prepared and printed using IFMIS, with a full roll out to be completed in fiscal 2022.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.11 Please allow me to address the issue of the Assembly's Financial Statements. On January 24 2019, the THA fulfilled its responsibility as outlined in Section 45 of Act 40 of 1996, as per the preparation and tabling of the Assembly's Financial Statement for the 2018 financial year. Additionally, Madam Presiding Officer, Section 46 of the Act states, that the Assembly's accounts are public accounts and are to be audited by the Auditor General's Department. In this regard, we continue to work diligently with the Auditor General's Department to ensure that all un-audited reports are brought up-to-date. We intend to meet with the new Auditor General and her team in early July to bring resolution to this issue.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 3.12 Please allow me to provide an update of our past development initiatives and to detail our fiscal priorities for 2020.

#### **4 Update on Existing Developmental Initiatives and New Priorities for Fiscal 2020**

##### ***Introduction***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.1 The budget estimates, which I will present later on, were largely influenced by, the Draft Medium-Term Policy and Planning Framework (MTPPF), the THA Pre-Budget Survey, the contributions of various stakeholders in the pre-Budget Consultation Meetings for 2019, and the budgetary submissions from the Divisions of the Assembly. These submissions have assisted us in setting an agenda to propel the island's development forward and that is why the Budget for fiscal 2020 is appropriately themed "Advancing Our Development Agenda". This year's budget focuses on the following areas:

- Accelerating Economic Growth and Promoting Diversification;
- Creating Jobs and Enhancing Productivity;
- Fostering Innovation and Creativity;
- Education and Human Capital Development;
- Tourism Sector Development;
- Expanding Food Production;
- Development of the Co-operative Sector;
- Improving Health Care and Wellness;
- Housing Opportunities;
- Holistic Development of Young People;
- Infrastructure and Infrastructure Strategy;
- Environmental Sustainability;
- Crime and Safety; and,
- Community Empowerment.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.2 I will now elaborate on each of these thematic areas in turn, starting with Accelerating Economic Growth and Promoting Diversification.

***a. Accelerating Economic Growth and Promoting Diversification***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.3 One of the most important developmental aspirations of this Administration is to stimulate economic growth and diversification of the Tobago economy. We hold the view that it is only through sustainable economic growth and diversification that we can develop the economic resilience to improve our overall standard of living over the long term. As such, our growth and





The work to diversify our economy and foster economic growth is skillfully undertaken by the Business Development Unit (BDU) in the Division of Community Development, Enterprise Development and Labour. Additional support to penetrate export markets will be provided by the Division of Finance and the Economy through the Strategic Business Support and Development Unit, the Eco-Industrial Company of Tobago (E-IDCOT) and the Venture Capital Equity Fund (VCEFL) as the THA continues to develop the private sector.

diversification strategy is closely linked to our work at the Business Development Unit (BDU), now under the purview of the Division of Community Development, Enterprise Development and Labour; our work at the Strategic Business Support and Development Unit (SBSDU), 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 partnership with the private sector in Tobago.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.4 In the last year, the Business Development Unit provided loans and grants totalling approximately \$2.4 million to forty-two (42) entrepreneurs to establish and expand their businesses. We can proudly state that since the inception of both the Enterprise Assistance Fund (EAF) and the Enterprise Assistance Grant Programme (EAGP), Tobago businesses have received approximately \$48 million in financial assistance along with technical support to improve their operations. In addition, the BDU continues to stimulate entrepreneurship at the community level, through its road market initiative across the island, providing opportunities for one hundred and sixty (160) entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services over the last twelve (12) months.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.5 In the next fiscal year, the BDU will continue to support our diversification thrust through enhanced Enterprise Assistance Fund (EAF) and Grant Programmes. The BDU will also continue to provide opportunities for Tobago entrepreneurs to showcase their products by hosting several community caravans. Additionally, building on the success of the recent “Tobago Goes to Trinidad” Business Expo, the BDU intends to host several similar initiatives in the upcoming fiscal year.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.6 Also critical to our growth and diversification strategy, is our work at the Strategic Business Support and Development Unit in the Division of Finance and the Economy. Last year, twenty (20) Tobago entrepreneurs were exposed to training in the fundamentals of exporting as part of a broader series of





**Top Photo-** The annual Tobago Economic and Business Outlook Conference hosted by the Division of Finance and the Economy.

**Photo Below-** Youth Empowerment Forum is one of the many events tabled on the Finance Week schedule of events.

capacity enhancement and training initiatives. Additionally, in preparation for Tobago's participation in the Trade and Investment Convention (TIC) 2019, twenty-three (23) entrepreneurs attended a series of training sessions. Moreover, Madam Presiding Officer, ongoing collaboration with FashionTT affords Tobago designers access to capacity enhancement programmes and initiatives such as the **Value Chain Investment Programme** and the **Business of Fashion** workshops. Also, Madam Presiding Officer, ongoing collaboration with ExporTT resulted in the establishment of the "Tobago Export Readiness Program" with an initial cohort of thirteen (13) Tobago entrepreneurs receiving specialized training in **Developing an Export Plan**.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.7 In mid June, Tobago entrepreneurs formally engaged the Cuban market through their attendance at the ExpoCaribe Trade Show in Santiago, Cuba, facilitated by the Ministry of Trade and ExporTT. This included one-on-one meetings with potential importers and distributors as well as with the Cuban Chamber of Commerce. These engagements will allow for greater market exposure, as the Assembly continues to support Tobago businesses to penetrate export markets.
- 4.8 In the next fiscal year, the Strategic Business Support and Development Unit will continue its work by forming strategic partnerships with external stakeholders (including Chambers of Commerce, Manufacturers Associations, Supermarket Associations, Universities, and Embassies) for greater market penetration of Tobago's products in selected markets. The Unit would also collaborate with FashionTT, ExporTT and CreativeTT to enable greater capacity enhancement training for Tobago entrepreneurs.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.9 The Eco-Industrial Development Company of Tobago (E-IDCOT) also has a significant role to play in the overall growth and diversification thrust of this Administration. Over the last year, E-IDCOT attracted thirteen (13) new applicants for leased land and built spaces. Seven (7) applicants were approved and are in the process of being on-boarded. These tenants are primarily in the areas of light manufacturing and agro-processing, and are expected to generate approximately one hundred and fifty (150) new private



sector jobs. Over the next fiscal year, several initiatives are proposed by E-IDCOT as part of the overall diversification strategy. These include:

- The establishment of a food testing lab at Cove in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) to provide avenues for local producers to test the quality of food and to receive certification for the domestic and export markets;
- The establishment of a business incubator and shared business space to provide a nurturing environment for entrepreneurs and enterprises in the early stages of their development, and to act as a focal point for innovation in business development; and,
- The establishment of an animation studio at Cove to assist in jump-starting an animation industry in Tobago.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.10 The final entity I want to talk about with respect to our strategy for growth and diversification is the Venture Capital Programme.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.11 The Venture Capital Equity Fund Limited (VCEFL) continues to persevere with the mandate of diversifying the Tobago economy and re-igniting the entrepreneurial spirit of the Tobago people. The Fund currently has \$3.42 million in assets under management and continues to work alongside potential investees to expand the company's portfolio. In fiscal 2019, the Fund received seven (7) proposals for investment totalling approximately \$31 million. The primary sectors were Clean and Light Manufacturing; Agriculture & Agro-Processing; Niche Tourism; Clean, Renewable Energy & Green Technology and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.12 The Board of Directors of the Fund were mandated to undertake a review of the Venture Capital Programme in order to expand the funding support to targeted and emerging sectors that are in alignment with the Assembly's Draft Medium-Term Policy and Planning Framework, via equity and loan financing.



The Division of Finance and the Economy, through the Strategic Business Support and Development Unit supports Tobago based businesses each year as they lead a delegation of entrepreneurs to the Trade and Investment Convention with the intention to penetrate export markets and create linkages.

The Fund is of the view that there are significant benefits to be gained from deeper synergies and partnerships with the private sector and budding entrepreneurs, as we seek to establish an ecosystem conducive to venture capital development in Tobago. Development of this ecosystem involves the training of fund managers, investors, and lawyers on the principles of private equity and venture capital investments, and preparing potential investees to be able to qualify for investment. This approach augurs well in making entrepreneurs, businesses and investors more receptive to equity financing along with its requisite risk appetite and ownership sharing tenets. Of equal importance is the development of an incubator system within educational institutions, so that young, talented entrepreneurs are encouraged and mentored.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.13 As an Administration, we are proud of our achievements and initiatives over the past eighteen (18) years, to advance the expansion and support of the private sector. The aforementioned Units and Companies tasked with enterprise development, have been mandated to review and reorient their programmes in accordance with our new development agenda, to facilitate greater development funding support for start-ups, business expansion, retooling, renovation and product development. This realignment will provide greater support to the wider private sector, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and stakeholder organisations, including the Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce; the Tobago Agricultural Society; the Tobago Apicultural Society; the Tobago Hotel and Tourism Association; and, the Tobago Unique Bed and Breakfast and Self Catering Association.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.14 Let me now turn to job creation and productivity enhancement.

***b. Creating Jobs and Enhancing Productivity***

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.15 The most recent labour market data on Tobago from the CSO suggest that approximately 57 per cent of the Tobago labour force is employed in the state sector with the private sector employing 43 per cent. By contrast, at the

national level about 25 per cent of the labour force is employed by the state sector with the private sector employing about 75 per cent. Madam Presiding Officer, the distribution of employment between the state and private sector is less than optimal and it is something that we will continue to address over the medium to long term, as we seek to create more sustainable and high paying jobs in the private sector. This will only happen if the private sector on the island can develop and expand to such an extent that they can scale-up their existing operations and penetrate new export markets.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.16 One of the strategies we propose to employ is the use of a Job Vacancy Survey that will detail the jobs required by the private sector now and in the future. This would assist in making the matching process easier, and foster a greater alignment between the skills required by the private sector and the skills available in our labour force. The information emanating from this Survey will inform the priority areas for tertiary level funding from the Assembly's Department of Advanced Training and Advisory Services (DATAS). Further, to assist in this recruitment process, we will continue to make the services of the Employment Exchange Bureau available to the private sector in Tobago free of charge. Madam Presiding Officer, over the medium to long term, we remain committed to ensuring a significant shift in the distribution of jobs between the private sector and the state sector.
- 4.17 But, Madam Presiding Officer, even as we treat with our employment issues, it is of vital importance that we continue to address the problems of productivity, both in the public and private sectors. Earlier this year, we debated and discussed initiatives and cogent solutions to the productivity challenges confronting this island. Two major initiatives to address these challenges are the establishment of the Tobago Productivity Council and the Public Service Academy. Our productivity challenge is one which we must confront with urgency and an Executive Council Note has been prepared for the review of the Executive Council.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.18 I now turn to our strategy for innovation and creativity



**c. *Fostering Innovation and Creativity***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.19 Also central to our approach for stimulating economic growth in Tobago, is our strategy to establish Tobago as an Intelligent Island. You would recall in my past Budget Statements, I highlighted the need for Tobago to utilize Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as an enabler of socio-economic development, drawing strong parallels from the Singapore and Estonia models. Our stated intention then, and now, is to transform Tobago into an ***Intelligent Island***. Last year, at the annual Tobago Economic and Business Outlook Conference, hosted by the Division of Finance and the Economy, this issue was addressed with particular emphasis on ICT integration and infrastructure. In his keynote address, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT), Dr. Ronald Walcott highlighted the integral role of ICT in the economic growth and development of the island, and the nation as a whole. Indeed, as an Administration we recognise the importance of ICT, innovation and creativity, and therefore we will continue to advance towards establishing Tobago as an Intelligent Island. In this regard, several initiatives are outlined within the Draft Medium-Term Policy and Planning Framework, and is in alignment with the National ICT Plan, which sets out specific strategies geared towards improving ICT in Tobago. **These strategies include:**

- Enhancing ICT Infrastructure across the island through the implementation of high-speed broadband connectivity which would provide a platform to enhance access and connectivity;
- Developing and installing digital infrastructure which would improve connectivity and collaboration across the Assembly and between the Assembly and Central Government;
- Standardizing digital tools and services across the Assembly for all events, products, services and programmes. It would also greatly improve the impact and reach of the Assembly's online presence;
- Providing incentives for international ICT professionals to share their expertise with local counterparts to enhance the quality of our ICT



The Tobago Information Technology Limited (TITL) houses the Tobago Innovation Centre and the Pearson Vue authorised international testing center. Tobagonians now have the opportunity to complete ICT related training..

products and services, as well as to provide additional professional skills and expertise to develop our own ICT infrastructure; and,

- Empowering young adults by providing capacity building activities with specific focus on coding, user interface and user experience, design and animation.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.20 Also central to Tobago's diversification strategy is our investment in the construction of a Tier 3 Data Centre in collaboration with TSTT. A Request for Proposals (RfP) was issued earlier this year and submissions are currently being reviewed. Madam Presiding Officer, this project is integral to the Assembly's overall Intelligent Island mandate which I alluded to earlier.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.21 Another essential component of our innovation strategy relates to the work at the Tobago Information Technology Limited (TITL). A key initiative undertaken by TITL over the past year to foster innovation and creativity is the introduction of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Afterschool Programme, targeting students at both secondary and primary levels and exposing them to a number of activities in the field of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Programming and Coding, Robotics and the application of Drones. This initiative fosters and shapes persons from an early age to become future innovators and inventors. Thus far, just over one hundred (100) students have benefitted from this initiative.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.22 In the next fiscal year, TITL will also offer tertiary level training in ICT. In this regard, TITL is in discussions with key educational institutions in Trinidad with a view to exploring physical, technological or hybrid modes of course delivery to Tobago students through the TITL Innovation Centre.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.23 Permit me to now look at our strategy for education and human capital development.

***d. Education and Human Capital Development***

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.24 One of the main pillars in the development of any society is the strength and success of its education system. Over the last year, the Division of Education, Innovation and Energy (DEIE), has spearheaded a number of initiatives geared towards improving the delivery of quality education from Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) to the tertiary level.
- 4.25 At the ECCE level, Madam Presiding Officer, there has been ongoing discussions with numerous stakeholders in preparation for the construction of five (5) ECCE centres earmarked for Courland, Plymouth, Belle Garden, Roxborough and Bon Accord. This project is expected to provide early education to approximately two hundred (200), 3-5 year olds across the island.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.26 The Division has also increased its focus on Special Education. Additional staff was appointed to the School for the Deaf, Speech and Language Impaired and the Happy Haven School, to aid in the delivery of quality education to our differently-abled students. Additionally, the Division constructed calming rooms for our differently-abled students last year. In the upcoming fiscal year, construction of the School for the Deaf, Speech and Language Impaired will commence at Signal Hill.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.27 Emphasis was also placed on human resource development and capacity building at the primary and secondary levels, to cultivate a culture of more effective and efficient management and administration of our schools. In this regard, school leadership and financial management training programmes were conducted for school administrators. Also, curriculum planning, development and continuous training workshops were conducted in various subject areas for primary and secondary educators. Additionally, the Professional Development Centre established in 2018 at Mardon House, John Dial has provided numerous training opportunities for curriculum officers, principals and teachers to improve teaching and learning as well as student performance.





📍 Hope Learning Enrichment Centre



Investing in our human capital will foster the island's development. From our pre-schoolers to the educators, we are investing in their development and this island's future.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.28 With regard to the school feeding programme, we currently offer breakfast to approximately 2,500 primary school students and lunch to 13,000 early childhood, primary and secondary school students throughout Tobago. In the last year, we have placed greater emphasis on providing local content through enhanced and standardised menus and in the upcoming year we will continue to train our food service providers in the areas of food safety and food preparation.

Madam Presiding officer,

- 4.29 In January 2019, the Division of Education established the Learning Enrichment Centre (LEC) at Hope. This Centre offers academic refinement and psychological support to students who are on suspension by providing one-on-one interaction through student-centered programmes geared to minimise and eradicate further disruptive behaviours and reduce the exposure to potential negative influences when students are on suspension from school. At the LEC, students can participate in individual and group counselling, skill building sessions, remediation and other interventions tailored to their specific needs.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.30 We continue to ensure the comfort and wellbeing of our staff and students to facilitate student learning. Within the last year, the Division of Education conducted repairs to thirty-three (33) primary and nine (9) secondary schools and completed expansion works to four (4) primary schools around Tobago. Additionally, proposals are currently under review for the relocation of the Scarborough Secondary School.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.31 In my last Budget Statement, I indicated our intent to implement a Construction Certification Training Programme. The Programme was established at the Roxborough Trade Centre and at the Metal Industries Company Institute of Technology (MIC-IT) at Canaan. Twenty-seven (27) students were assessed and graduated from Roxborough in January 2019,

while twenty-nine (29) students successfully completed their assessment and will graduate from the Programme in June 2019.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.32 The Division of Education, Innovation and Energy is collaborating with the Tobago College and University Consortium (TCUC) in an effort to advance the establishment of the University of Tobago (UoT). The Division has also established the Tobago Higher Education Council (THEC) which is expected to manage the delivery of tertiary education programmes offered by various institutions in Tobago.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.33 I now turn to tourism sector development.

***e. Tourism Sector Development***

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.34 Notwithstanding the ongoing plans of this Administration to diversify the Tobago economy, support for the tourism sector in Tobago remains a key priority. Madam Presiding Officer, in keeping with the Three Year Road Map for Growth, developed by the Tobago Tourism Agency Limited (TTAL) in collaboration with key tourism stakeholders on the island, we continue to implement a number of initiatives to enhance Tobago's tourism product and market our island as a premier tourist destination. In the last fiscal year, the initiatives to enhance our tourism product and the marketing of Tobago included:

- The rebranding of destination Tobago as: "Tobago Beyond Ordinary". A local launch was held in October 2018, with subsequent international launches occurring at the World Travel Market (WTM) in November 2018, International Tourism Bourse (ITB) Berlin in March 2019 and Canada, in May 2019;
- The participation in several regional and international trade shows and conferences to market Tobago in Europe, USA and the Caribbean;
- The administration of the Tourism Accommodation Upgrade Programme (TAUP) which provides a reimbursement grant for approved upgrade works;





# Tobago

beyond ordinary...

Tourism, as a major contributor to the Tobago economy, is an integral part of the national economic diversification plan.

The Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation and the Tobago Tourism Agency Ltd (TTAL) recently launched the new tagline, "**TobaGo Beyond Ordinary.**" This rebranding seeks to boost the tourism product and advance the island's tourism market.



- The launch of a Community Tourism Awareness Campaign and the establishment of Tourism Youth Clubs in seven (7) of the nine (9) secondary schools on the island;
- The hosting of several familiarisation tours for travel agents, airline partners and product managers; and,
- The successful negotiation of airlift through Sunwing Airlines out of Canada in December 2018.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.35 Arising out of these initiatives, we are beginning to see some encouraging signs in terms of increased arrivals to Tobago. For the period January to May 2019, international air arrivals increased by 2,054 -- a 17 per cent increase relative to the comparative period in 2018. But, Madam Presiding Officer, notwithstanding these positive signs, we continue to encounter significant challenges particularly in the lack of high quality rooms and insufficient investment in tourism marketing due to our fiscal constraints. Regrettably, we lost a valuable opportunity to simultaneously address these persistent problems plaguing our tourism sector with the loss of the Sandals investment. We allowed petty partisan politics to stymie Tobago's development. However, Madam Presiding Officer, we continue to work assiduously towards the development of the tourism sector. I wish to highlight some of the initiatives aimed at developing the sector over the next fiscal year. They are:

- The establishment of a Tobago Tourism Council, chaired by the Honourable Chief Secretary, which will provide a platform for tourism industry stakeholders to discuss opportunities and address the challenges facing the industry;
- The provision of training to improve service excellence across the industry;
- The continued participation in several national, regional and international trade shows and conferences, inclusive of the CTO UK Road Show, the Birmingham Dive Show, WTM in London, Caribbean Week in Canada, and the ITB in Berlin;



The Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation along with other key stakeholders represented Tobago at the World Travel Market in the UK for the launch of the “**Toba Go Beyond Ordinary**” rebrand. The THA and the TTAL contingent engaged in meetings with existing and potential partners at the three (3) day trade show to advance Tobago’s interest in the UK market.

- The restoration and upgrade to several heritage sites and attractions inclusive of the Roxborough Cocoa House and the Historical Site at Cove Estate;
- The continued hosting of several festivals and events inclusive of the Dragon Boat Festival, Blue Food Festival and the Tobago Jazz Experience;
- The provision of additional direct international airlift to Tobago;
- The implementation of free Wi-Fi at strategic sites and attractions across the island; and,
- The creation of Destination Apps to enhance the visitor experience by showcasing key sites, attractions and events.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.36 I now turn to our programme of activities to expand food production in Tobago.

***f. Expanding Food Production***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.37 One of the critical developmental priorities of this Administration is to enhance the food security in Tobago, thereby increasing the contribution of the agricultural sector to the island's GDP. In this regard, the Division of Food Production, Forestry and Fisheries, continues to undertake a number of initiatives to boost agricultural production on the island. For instance, through the Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory, approximately 35,000 in vitro plants were produced and made available to farmers. In addition, through the Home Garden Initiative, we continue to encourage the general population in Tobago to get involved in agriculture. At the end of last year, approximately seven hundred (700) persons were registered in the Home Garden Initiative with their progress continually monitored by staff at the Division. The Division's Agricultural Access Roads Programme has served to improve access to arable lands, at a cost of approximately \$45 million allowing farmers on the island to scale up their production. Among the thirty-five (35) agricultural access roads completed over the last year are: Jigger Hill, Indian Walk and Farmers Road in Mason Hall, Observatory in Speyside, Flag Staff Hill in Charlotteville, and Windsor Road, Caledonia, Farm Road and Terry Hill Road in Mt. St. George.





Tissue Culture Lab

Food security is important to Tobago and so, the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), through the Division of Food Production, Forestry and Fisheries continues to take the necessary steps to increase agriculture production on the island. From initiatives such as the Scarborough Market Rehabilitation Project, the Eat Local Project and the Mango Exhibition, to improving Agriculture Access Roads, providing land to farmers and the Tissue Culture Lab, the THA is laying the groundwork for improved food security on the island.





Additionally, farmers in Tobago were exposed to approximately twenty-five (25) workshops covering a wide range of areas related to management and husbandry. In its thrust to support livestock production in Tobago, the Division, in collaboration with the Tobago Cold Storage and Warehouse Facility (TCOSWAF) provided animal feed to farmers at a reduced cost, and assisted in sourcing markets for their products.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.38 Over the next fiscal year, among the programmes and initiatives to be undertaken by the Division to expand agricultural production in Tobago are the following:

- The continuation of the Agricultural Access Roads Programme;
- The reopening of the Scarborough market;
- The continuation of the ‘Eat Local Campaign’;
- The completion of the Goldsborough Agricultural Irrigation Project;
- The establishment of a Community Business Facility for processing local fruits;
- The continuation of the Home Garden Initiative and the Agriculture at Schools programme;
- The provision of capacity enhancement training for farmers and prospective farmers; and,
- The continuation of support for the activities of the Tobago Agricultural Society (TAS) and the Tobago Apicultural Society.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.39 Please permit me to turn to our work with respect to the development of the Co-operative sector in Tobago.

***g. Development of the Co-operative Sector***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.40 The Co-operative Sector continues to play a critical role in Tobago’s overall economic development. There are currently twenty-six (26) active Credit Unions and nine (9) non-financial co-operatives operating in Tobago with a net asset base of approximately \$440 million. Recent GDP data on Tobago suggest





Working to strengthen the Co-operative sector were  
Julien Lewis Co-operative Officer II, Division of Finance and the Economy,  
Andrea McKenna Commissioner and Heidi Boos Legal Officer of Co-operative  
Development, Division of the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise  
Development during a session with Tobago Credit Unions and their members on  
settlement of disputes.

that the financial sector on the island contributes approximately 27 per cent to our GDP. The Co-operative Sector makes substantial contributions in the areas of financial services, the provision of housing and land acquisition, agro-processing and fishing.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.41 Over the next fiscal year, we propose to undertake several initiatives to strengthen the Co-operative Sector in Tobago including:

- The continuation of the Junior Co-operative Incentive Programme;
- The development of a Co-operative Statistical Database to facilitate evidenced-based policy making; and,
- The hosting of a series of capacity enhancement training programmes to improve governance and enable Co-operatives to better meet their statutory obligations and conform to recent international financial regulations.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.42 Permit me to turn to health and wellness

***h. Improving Health Care and Wellness***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.43 Our health status has significant implications for our overall standard of living and quality of life as a society. Goal Number 3 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is the right to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all. As such, the Division of Health, Wellness and Family Development continues to advance a number of strategies to ensure the delivery of quality health care. Some of the initiatives implemented in the last fiscal year are:

- The commissioning of a Women's Health Service (Pink Room) and Breast Health Clinic, which is an initiative to treat with women's health issues;
- The commissioning of the Levels four (4) and five (5) Triage Areas at the Scarborough General Hospital to reduce the waiting times at the Accident and Emergency Department;





Progressive strides are being made in the Tobago health sector. The Assembly has been able to move ahead on certain key fronts such as the Moriah Health Centre, the Women's Health Service/Pink Room, the Breast Health Clinic, Children's Authority, staff training to boost data collection for Cancer Registry, launching of a Leadership Graduate Trainee Programme, Prostate Cancer Seminars for men, and collaborative talks with the UN Women Executive Board on gender based violence.

- The introduction of free Arteriovenous (AV) fistula surgeries for thirty-nine (39) renal failure patients, and the requisite staff training, in collaboration with the Bridge of Life NGO;
- The establishment of the Regional Office and Assessment Centre of the Children's Authority in Tobago in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister;
- The re-establishment of the Tobago Coordinating Committee for Persons with Disabilities in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister; and,
- The hosting of public education sessions on conflict resolution, gender based issues, domestic violence, drug prevention and disaster preparedness.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.44 This is a brief overview of some of the key achievements in the area of health and wellness over the last year. Madam Presiding Officer, in the next fiscal year, as we continue to work towards improving the general level of health and well-being of our residents, we propose to undertake the following:

- The completion of the Moriah Health Centre by April 2020 at a cost of approximately \$28 million dollars;
- The construction of the Roxborough Hospital at a cost of approximately \$60 million dollars earmarked for completion by last quarter of 2020;
- The expansion of research in areas inclusive of aging, cancer, management of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs), mental health and biomedical waste management;
- The Division's continued partnership with the Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago (FPATT) for the provision of sexual and reproductive health services, the training of staff and the provision of family planning counselling services;
- The formalization of the relationship between the Division and the Trinbago Progressive Association out of New York, to support medical missions, donations of equipment, and health education activities throughout Tobago;





**Top photo-** Tobago East MP, Ayanna Webster-Roy leads the The Children's Authority ribbon cutting, front row from left former Board Member Dr. Maria Dillion-Remy, Children's Authority Chairman, Hanif E. A Benjamin, Tobago East MP, Ayanna Webster-Roy, Division of Health Administrator, Dianne Baker-Henry and Children's Authority Director, Safiya Noel.

**Photo Below-** DHWFD and TRHA launch the Leadership Graduate Trainee Programme comprising of emerging professionals from Tobago.





Division of Finance  
and the Economy

Division of Finance  
and the Economy

Division of Finance  
and the Economy



Division of Finance  
and the Economy



Division of Finance  
and the Economy

Division of Finance  
and the Economy

Division of Finance  
and the Economy



Division  
and the

Division of Finance  
and the Economy



The Emergency Social and Medical Assistance Unit in the Division of Finance and the Economy distributes Emergency Medical Alert Kits to the elderly who are in need of access to essential emergency response services.

- The provision of a range of activities for over 8,000 elderly persons in collaboration with the Tobago Association of the Elderly (TATE);
- The increase in support for the differently-abled population, inclusive of training for caregivers and parents through partnership with the Tobago Coordinating Committee for the Differently-abled (TCCD);
- The provision of adequate care for at-risk children inclusive of social workers, and a community residence for children in collaboration with the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago ; and,
- The improvement of renal disease care in Tobago in collaboration with the Washington School of Medicine.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.45 I now turn my attention to housing.

***i. Housing Opportunities***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.46 Housing is a basic human need and is a crucial determinant of the quality of life of citizens in Tobago. Home ownership requires a great deal of financial resources which many Tobagonians may find difficult to source for the construction of new homes. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal Number 11, calls for the provision of housing as an essential element of sustainable development, as it fosters a higher standard of living for all in any society. From this prospective, government has a critical role to play in providing adequate, safe and affordable housing, and as an Administration we are very cognizant of this, as we continue to work towards improving and expanding the housing stock on the island. Over the past year, many Tobagonians have benefitted from our programmes geared towards home ownership as well as the improvement of the housing stock on the island. In the last fiscal year, approximately three hundred and eighty-four (384) grants totalling \$2.9 million dollars were distributed under the Home Improvement Grant Programme, while, approximately seventy (70) Tobagonians received financial assistance totalling approximately \$1 million dollars under the Home Completion Programme. Additionally, under the Home Improvement Subsidy Programme, approximately forty-eight (48) Tobagonians received assistance to





The Tobago House of Assembly (THA) remains committed to providing affordable housing through its Housing Programme with Developments at Adventure, Blenheim, Castara and Roxborough.



the tune of \$0.4 million dollars and a further one hundred and forty- three (143) Tobagonians received assistance under the Beneficiary Owned Land Programme, totalling \$3.2 million dollars.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.47 As the Division continues to address the mismatch between the demand for and supply of public housing, major projects are proposed in the Riseland and Adelphi Developments. These projects are expected to add approximately one hundred and fifty- four (154) units to the housing stock on the island.

Madam Presiding Officer,

Please permit me to turn to our programme of activities for young people.

***j. Holistic Development of Young People***

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.48 This Administration remains committed to the holistic development of young Tobagonians. Not only do we support, encourage and reward their academic advancement, but we continue to assist our young people in their pursuit of excellence in areas of sport and culture. We also provide training opportunities to improve their employability and to empower them to pursue entrepreneurial activities. Our underlying philosophy is, that you cannot have sustainable development, which, by definition, is, “development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”, unless young people are the focal point of this development. It is against this backdrop that we continue to invest in the holistic development of our young people. Madam Presiding Officer, I am indeed heartened to see that some of our investments in our young people are already bearing fruit in the fields of sport, art and culture. In fact, several of our young people continue to excel at the national, regional and international levels, particularly in the field of sport. Please permit me to highlight some of these achievements, of which, all of us as Tobagonians, should be justifiably proud.
- 4.49 Madam Presiding Officer, at this year’s Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) Games Mr. Tyriq Horsford, won his fifth CARIFTA Games gold medal in the Men’s U20 Javelin. Ms. Safiya John also won gold in the Women’s Open Heptathlon. At the 2019 Special Olympics International World Games,

Ms. Sapphire Jackson won both gold and silver medals in the Soft Ball Throw and the Track and Field 100m Walk, respectively, and Ms. Aneicia Baptiste was a selectee on the National Netball Team for the upcoming Netball World Cup in England.

- 4.50 In the field of culture, two of our young Tobago steel pan arrangers, Mr. Kersh Ramsay and Mr. Ojay Richards both of whom are pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), excelled at the national stage in this year's Panorama. Madam Presiding Officer, this is just a snapshot of some of the recent achievements of our young people of Tobago. This goes to show that once our young people continue to strive for excellence, the sky is the limit. We, however, retain the responsibility to provide financial, technical and infrastructural support for them to achieve their full potential.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.51 Over the next fiscal year we will continue to support and celebrate youth excellence through a number of programmes not only at the Division of Sport and Youth Affairs, but across Divisions of the Tobago House of Assembly. Programmes and initiatives earmarked for young people over the next fiscal year include:

- The completion of the Whim Skills Development Centre at a cost of \$9.7 million in November 2019;
- The completion of the Goodwood Pavilion at a cost of approximately \$6.75 million;
- The hosting of the World of Work (WoW) programme to improve employability and to aid in personal development;
- The hosting of the Sports Awards and Tobago Youth Awards, where we continue to recognise and reward youth excellence in a range of areas;
- The hosting of the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme, Career Fairs, Life Skills, Professional Development and Summer Internship Programmes under the Youth Energised for Success (Y.E.S) Programme in the Division of Finance and the Economy;
- The hosting of a Financial Literacy Quiz, the You-Biz Summer Camp, Financial Literacy Business Tours and a Financial Literacy Youth





**Above-** Attendees of the 2019 Youth Empowerment Forum

**Below-** Participants of the Y.E.S Programme Professional Development Workshop

Youth development is a key priority of the Tobago House of Assembly. Our young people are being exposed to a wide range of activities that would help to nurture their holistic development. Through the Division of Finance and the Economy, the Youth Energised for Success (YES) Programme, support our young people to help prepare them as they grow to become leaders of tomorrow.



Exposition to sensitize our young people about financial literacy and entrepreneurial issues;

- The hosting the Tobago Youth Empowerment Forum by the Division of Finance and the Economy to expose our young people to cutting-edge ideas in the field of business; and,
- The upgrades to several of our recreational grounds inclusive of Hope, Speyside, Goodwood, Roxborough, Shaw Park and Plymouth.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.52 Please permit me to now examine our Infrastructure Development Strategy.

***k. Infrastructure and the Infrastructure Strategy***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.53 Tobago has significant infrastructure development needs. This Administration is of the considered view that, given existing fiscal constraints, in order to develop our infrastructure in Tobago, in any sustainable manner it is important that we adopt a strategic approach to this development. As such, the Executive Council approved the establishment of the Tobago Infrastructure Investment Strategy (TIIS) and appointed a Multi-Sectoral Committee (MSC) in the Division of Finance and the Economy representing private sector, civil society and a cross-section of decision makers, who are able to capitalise on opportunities for linkages between Divisions, Departments and Agencies (DDAs).

4.54 The commissioning of a long-term strategy as well as associated medium-term Priority Investment Packages (PIPs), is essential to achieving our development goals. Not only does this foster a more transparent and integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment, but it also establishes best practices for independent assessment which maximizes value to the taxpayers, by more efficiently managing issues such as, the availability and cost of project financing, maintenance capacity, judicious planning, and sustainability. Moreover, the development of a capital investment strategy that defines Tobago's investment priorities also establishes a comprehensive and viable project pipeline, which can serve as a single point of reference for potential investors and partners.

4.55 However, Madam Presiding Officer, even as we take a long-term view to develop our infrastructure, we recognise there are some projects that need to take place immediately. As such, over the last twelve (12) months, we invested significantly in the development of the physical infrastructure in Tobago. Among our major initiatives were the following:

- Ongoing works on the Thompson River Bridge which includes the creation of a bypass road and the installation of a temporary Bailey bridge;
- Road refurbishment and resurfacing of the Claude Noel Highway, between Orange Hill and Rockley Vale Intersection at a cost of \$30 million;
- Upgrade works to Secondary Roads to the tune of \$35 million inclusive of Riseland Trace, Thompson Trace and Allfields;
- Construction of two retaining walls at Mt. St. George;
- Completion of the Milford Road Bypass to Smithfield Road, to provide improved access to the New Scarborough Roman Catholic (R.C) Primary School; and,
- Construction of the New Roxborough Administrative Complex at a cost of \$60 million.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.56 The Division of Infrastructure has identified a number of projects designed to enhance the quality of life for Tobagonians. These include the following:

- The rehabilitation of the Claude Noel Highway between Rockley Vale and the Bacolet Road Intersections;
- Coastal rehabilitation work inclusive of the construction of sea defense walls at Grange and Pigeon Point, and the Milford Road Coastal Rehabilitation Project;
- The construction of special drainage and irrigation work at Hampden Lowlands;
- The reconstruction of the two (2) bridges on the Northside Connector and Rockley Vale Road and at Craig Hall to accommodate two (2) lane vehicular traffic;





© Barbados Bay Jetty



The Studley Park Enterprise Limited (SPEL) is ensuring that the construction sector receives adequate aggregate to supply the ongoing infrastructural activities on the island. The quarry's surplus production allows for weekly shipments of aggregate to Trinidad via the Barbados Bay Jetty. Also pictured are ongoing road paving exercises.



- The upgrade and realignment of sections of the Windward road including, Turpin Bend at Charlotteville; and,
- The major refurbishment to jetties inclusive of Plymouth, Parlatuvier and Little Tobago at a cost of \$38 million dollars.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.57 I now examine the issue of environmental sustainability.

***1. Environmental Sustainability***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.58 There is no doubt that the quality of our natural environment has significant implications for our overall standard of living and quality of life. The environment touches all sectors of the island. For example, poor management of coral reefs and poor sea water quality due to sewage runoff affects fisheries, hampers agriculture and poses health risks to sea-bathers, while increasing coral reef erosion; poor coastal development leads to coastal erosion and damage to public and private property. This Administration is therefore committed to ensuring that any development taking place on the island, will not unduly affect the environment. We are committed to developing Tobago in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and climate neutral. It is in this context that the Assembly continues to embark on a number of strategies and initiatives aimed at protecting our pristine natural resources. These include the:

- Implementation of coastal protection programmes at Fort Granby and at Lambeau;
- Re-introduction of both salt and fresh water quality testing to inform interventions;
- Completion of a pilot study on Air Quality and Traffic Pollution in Scarborough and Bon Accord and Crown Point;
- Installation of camera traps at dumping hotspots to deter illegal dumping and improve detection rates; and,
- Establishment of a Wetland System Inventory and Monitoring Programme to collect baseline data to inform restoration activities.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.59 Over the next fiscal year, as part of its ongoing quest to protect and preserve Tobago's pristine natural environment, among the initiatives to be implemented by the Environment Department are:

- The acquisition of additional equipment to allow for more accurate and reliable water quality testing and air quality monitoring;
- The establishment of a comprehensive recycling initiative in Tobago that will target in the initial phase, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, glass bottles and paper;
- The phasing out the use of polyurethane (plastic) garbage bags and the introduction of biodegradable garbage bags; and,
- The collaboration with the private sector on the phasing out of single-use plastic bags.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.60 I shall now examine the issue of crime and safety.

***m. Crime and Safety***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.61 There is no doubt that crime has major implications for our development as it can discourage foreign direct investments and stifle our island's economic growth. Therefore, our Administration continues to treat seriously with the issue of public safety for all Tobago residents and visitors. Madam Presiding Officer, although there has been an increase in minor crimes, there has been a 22 per cent reduction in serious crime over the past year. Although Tobago is relatively safe, quite recently, there have been isolated incidents of criminality against citizens and visitors. We must therefore adopt a zero tolerance approach towards crime. As an island, we must recognise that crime has the potential to negatively impact the long-term viability of our tourism product. As law abiding citizens, each of us has a responsibility to work to keep our island safe. We must adopt an "all hands on deck" approach to fighting this scourge .

Madam Presiding Officer,



The opening of the state-of-the-art Shirvan Police Station in March 2019, and the new Roxborough Police Station later in the year are important initiatives geared towards protecting all residents of and visitors to our beautiful island. The Tobago House of Assembly is collaborating with the Central Government to ensure that Tobago is safe and secure..



- 4.62 In its continuing efforts to keep this island safe, this Administration has been engaged in meaningful collaborations with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and other stakeholders. The Assembly, in partnership with the TTPS- Tobago Division, established the Tourism Oriented Police Unit.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.63 The Assembly is also collaborating with the Police Service on the installation of additional CCTV cameras across Tobago. Surveillance technology can play a vital role in building and developing the security on this island. In fact, many policing agencies worldwide have implemented numerous technological solutions to improve operational efficiency and outcomes while combatting crime. This technological approach can impact tremendously on our efforts to improve safety and security in Tobago. Together, we must insist that our efforts have one outcome, that is, to ensure that Tobago remains safe in addition to being clean, green and serene.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.64 I now examine the issue of community empowerment

***n. Community Empowerment***

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 4.65 This Administration holds the view that there can be no genuine and sustainable development unless our communities play an integral part. Among our initiatives to strengthen and empower communities in Tobago over the last year are the following:

- The completion of a new Multipurpose Facility at Belle Garden;
- The completion of upgrade works to several Multipurpose Facilities and Community Centres in Tobago inclusive of the Bethesda and Lowlands Multipurpose Facilities and the Castara and L'Anse Fourmi Community Centres;
- The provision of computer literacy training at various communities throughout Tobago in collaboration with the Tobago Institute of Literacy; and,
- The provision of capacity enhancement training in a wide range of areas to persons in the community under the Vocational Skills Training



*Top Photo-* Sea to Sea Marathon Tobago  
*Photo Below-* Primary School Coaching Project  
hosted by the Division of Sport and Youth Affairs



Programme where over 1,000 persons graduated from fifty-three (53) programmes in 2018.

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.66 Over the next fiscal year, among the planned programmes and initiatives to upgrade community infrastructure and empower communities in Tobago are the following:

- The continuation of upgrade works to several Community and Multipurpose Centres throughout Tobago inclusive of Pembroke, Delaford, Les Coteaux, Charlotteville, Glamorgan, Betsy's Hope and Speyside;
- The outfitting and commissioning of Adventure and Charlotteville Micro Enterprise Centres;
- The continuation of the Vocational Skills and the Integrated Community Literacy Improvement Programme;
- The expansion and enhancement of the Cool Kids Camp geared towards exposing children to art and craft as well as civics, agriculture and environmental awareness; and,
- The implementation of a Safe Community Model Project to promote safety and security at the community level.

### ***Summary***

Madam Presiding Officer,

4.67 The foregoing are the primary areas which the Assembly's fiscal package for 2020 will address. Though audacious, we believe our programme of activities is achievable and will result in substantial improvements to the quality of life and living standards of all Tobago residents.

## **5 The 2020 Expenditure Estimates**

### ***a. Recurrent Estimates and Highlights***

Madam Presiding Officer,



5.1 I now present the expenditure estimates for 2020 beginning with the Recurrent Estimates.

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.2 The Recurrent Estimates for fiscal 2020 totals \$3.26 billion. This can be disaggregated as follows:

- Personnel Expenditure - - \$ 917.2M;
- Goods and Services - - \$ 1.08B;
- Minor Equipment Purchases - - \$ 96.3M; and,
- Transfers and Subsidies - - \$ 1.17B.

5.3 This represents an increase of just under \$24.7 million from last year's request. The recurrent estimates for the Divisions for fiscal 2020 are as follows:

- Assembly Legislature - - \$28M;
- Office of the Chief Secretary - - \$207.2M;
- Finance and the Economy - - \$264.7M;
- Food Production Forestry and Fisheries - - \$294.2M;
- Tourism, Culture and Transportation - - \$392.6M;
- Education, Innovation and Energy - - \$512M;
- Community Development, Enterprise  
Development and Labour - - \$124.6M;
- Infrastructure, Quarries and the Environment - - \$524.7M;
- Health, Wellness and Family Development - - \$778.3M;
- Settlements, Urban Renewal and Public Utilities - - \$38.2M; and,
- Sport and Youth Affairs - - \$98.7M.

5.4 Madam Presiding Officer, some of the highlights in the recurrent expenditure for fiscal 2020 are:

- Tobago Tourism Agency \$140M;
- Rolling Three Year Tourism Plan \$88M;
- Tobago Infrastructure Investment Strategy \$9M;
- Assistance to Small Properties in the Tourism Industry \$8.6M;
- Establishment of a Public Service Academy \$5M;

- Establishment of an Intelligent Island \$5M;
- Agricultural Incentive Programme \$4M;
- Youth Development Programme \$3M;
- Tobago Apicultural Society \$2M;
- Tobago Agricultural Society \$1.5M; and,
- Subsidy for Fishermen \$1.5M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

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

***b. Development Programme Expenditure Estimates and Highlights***

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.6 The estimates for the Development Programme for fiscal 2020 amount to \$1.45 billion, an increase of \$71.1 million from the fiscal 2019 request to the central government. The Development Programmes Estimates are disaggregated as follows:

- Pre-Investment - - \$0.8M;
- Economic Infrastructure - - \$743.7M;
- Social Infrastructure - - \$427.2M; and,
- Multi-sectoral and Other Services - - \$280.1M.

5.7 To support our diversification efforts we will provide funding for:

- E-IDCOT \$40.7M;
- The Scarborough Esplanade Phase II \$15M;
- The Business Incubator Programme \$7.9M;
- Venture Capital Equity Fund Limited \$4M; and,
- Enterprise Development Grant Programme \$3M.

5.8 We will continue to provide for the expansion of the tourism sector, and as such, the Development Programme Estimates cater for:

- Establishment of Facilities on Little Tobago \$10M;
- Lure Wildlife Nature Park \$5.6M;
- King's Bay Beach Facility \$2.8M; and,

- Phase III of the Fort King George Heritage Park Project \$2.5M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.9 Increasing production of the agricultural sector remains a critical priority. As such, the Development Programme Estimates cater for:

- The Agricultural Access Roads Programme \$50M;
- The Improvement to Beaches and Landing Facilities \$10M;
- The Goldsborough Estate Irrigation Project \$8.5M; and,
- Revitalisation of the Hope Farm \$2.5M.

Madam Presiding Officer,

5.10 The Assembly continues to invest in education with provisions for:

- Improvements to Primary Schools \$6.2M;
- Programme for the Computerization of Primary Schools \$2.1M; and,
- Upgrade of the Charlotteville Library \$1.1M.

5.11 Expanding the housing stock remains a priority for the Assembly. Accordingly, our Development Programme Estimates provide for:

- Development of Adventure Phase II \$29.5M;
- Land Development at Shirvan Road \$28M;
- Land Development at Adelphi Estate \$16.7M; and,
- New Riseland Housing Development \$9.6M.

5.12 As we continue to enhance our physical infrastructure our Development Programme Estimates provide for:

- Major Improvement Works on Secondary Roads \$55M;
- Road Resurfacing Programme \$50M;
- Improvement to Milford Road Bridges \$30M;
- Rehabilitation of the Claude Noel Highway \$30M;
- Construction of the Milford Road Bypass to Smithfield \$30M;
- Construction of Sea Defence Walls \$15M;
- Milford Road Coastal Protection \$8M;



- Roxborough/Bloody Bay Road – Retaining Wall \$6.5M; and,
- Improvement to the Northside Road \$5M.

***c. Other Estimates***

- 5.13 Madam Presiding Officer, I wish to include as well in the estimates for fiscal 2020, provisions for URP and CEPEP totalling \$73.3 million and \$39.2 million, respectively.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 5.14 Over the last twelve (12) months both URP and CEPEP were restructured to improve productivity and operational efficiency. Both Programmes undertook several initiatives including construction projects, environmental preservation, agricultural production, and manufacturing of furniture and concrete products. These activities can be expected to continue within the next fiscal year.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 5.15 I now turn my focus to the financing of the 2020 expenditure estimates.

**6 Financing the 2020 Expenditure Estimates**

- 6.1 Madam Presiding Officer, for fiscal 2020, the estimates of revenue, both tax and non-tax, are as follows:

1.	Taxes on Income and Profits	- -	\$146M;
2.	Taxes on Property	- -	\$1.3M;
3.	Taxes on Goods and Services	- -	\$56M;
4.	Taxes on International Trade	- -	\$3.2M;
5.	Other Taxes	- -	\$5.2M;
	<b>Total Tax Revenue</b>	- -	<b>\$ 211.7M;</b>
6.	Property Income Taxes	- -	\$0.2M;
7.	Other Non-tax Revenue	- -	\$1M;
	<b>Total Non-Tax Revenue</b>	- -	<b>\$1.2M; and,</b>
	<b>Total Revenue</b>	- -	<b>\$212.9M.</b>

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.2 The Assembly is working towards improving its revenue generation capacity. A primary initiative in this regard has been the restructuring of the Studley Park Quarry and the formation of Studley Park Enterprise Limited (SPEL). The re-organisation has resulted in significant increases in efficiency and productivity at the Quarry as well as greater sales and revenues from the related output. The commissioning of the Barbados Bay Jetty in February of this year, has increased the sale of quarry products to Trinidad with the potential for regional export. For 2019, SPEL is expected to realize a profit in keeping with conservative projections.
- 6.3 The Assembly continues to work with the Central Government on the establishment of the Revenue Authority. The Assembly submitted written commitments to the Draft Bill, which is receiving the attention of a Joint Select Committee of Parliament. The establishment of the Revenue Authority is expected to significantly enhance tax and non-tax revenues collected in Tobago. A follow-up meeting is scheduled with the Ministry of Finance to discuss Tobago-specific issues in relation to the Revenue Authority.
- 6.4 To address the perennial shortfall in funding for capital expenditure, the Executive Council has approved the utilisation of alternative financing mechanisms such as the issuance of a Bond and the implementation of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) modality to accelerate the island's development momentum. The funding raised by the Bond will finance projects in key priority areas such as the Intelligent Island Project, the Affordable Housing Programme, Coastal Restoration, Sporting and Health Facilities. Madam Presiding Officer, we are excited about the prospects of our first Bond issue and continue to collaborate with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the necessary institutional framework is established to underpin the Assembly's debt management strategy.
- 6.5 We continued our collaboration with many of our multilateral partners and the diplomatic community in a concerted effort to leverage their technical expertise towards improved operational efficiency and to access additional resources. These relationships have not only allowed us to participate in initiatives such as the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) and the Public Financial Management (PFM) transformation, but has also lent support

to the development of the Infrastructure Investment Strategy mentioned previously.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 6.6 The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) continue to collaborate with us on the advancement of our PPP programme; and more recently, exchange missions with the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ) have led to increased institutional strengthening in this area. Over the next fiscal year, the Investment and Public Private Partnership (IP3) Unit will be working closely with the DBJ team and our multilateral partners to institute regional best practices, further develop the procurement process, and advance investment interest in our candidate projects.

## **7 Collaborations with Central Government**

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.1 Before I conclude, I wish to discuss some ongoing collaborations between the Assembly and Central Government in accordance with the Sixth Schedule of Act 40 of 1996.
- 7.2 The first issue I wish to treat with is Transportation. Madam Presiding Officer, Caribbean Airlines Limited (CAL) has entered into a wet lease agreement with Danish Air Transport to facilitate increased travel between the islands from April through September, 2019. This arrangement is expected to add additional seats during this peak period of travel. It is anticipated that CAL will provide 216,152 seats for the upcoming July-August holiday period.
- 7.3 With respect to the sea-bridge, the arrival of the *Jean de la Valette* is a welcomed addition to our current fleet servicing the sea-bridge, providing luxurious accommodation and additional capacity for eight hundred (800) passengers and two hundred and thirty (230) cars. We also anticipate by mid-2020, the arrival of two (2) brand new fast ferries which are now under construction by Austal Ships and Incat Limited.

Madam Presiding Officer,



- 7.4 The second issue I wish to provide an update on, is that of internal self-government. The Constitution (Amendment) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill, 2018 was laid by the Prime Minister, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley in the House of Representatives. The Bill seeks to grant, among other things, equality of status between the islands of Trinidad and Tobago.
- 7.5 Shortly after the Bill was laid, a Joint Select Committee was established to conduct a clause by clause examination. To date, the Committee has submitted two (2) interim reports with another report to be submitted in September, 2019.
- 7.6 Whilst the Committee continues to work diligently, to critically assess the constitutional, legislative and fiscal framework within which the Tobago Island Government is expected to operate, this Administration is simultaneously working to strengthen and develop its human and institutional capacities to facilitate a seamless transition into Tobago's new governance structure. I urge all Tobagonians to remain hopeful that the vision of our forefathers will soon be realized.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.7 His Excellency, President, Sir Ellis Clarke, a former Head of State, at an inauguration ceremony of the THA, was clear in his remarks that "the islands of Trinidad and Tobago, must walk side-by-side, not one behind the other". For this Bill to succeed, it requires a three-fifth (3/5) majority; therefore there needs to be bipartisan support for Tobago and Tobagonians to achieve our goal for self-determination. We therefore urge the Members opposite, to let good sense prevail and ask that they appeal to their friends in the Opposition to support the Bill in its entirety when it is brought up for debate.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.8 Besides these two (2) issues, the Assembly continues to collaborate with various Ministries on a range of projects geared towards Tobago's development. First is the Ministry of National Security. The Shirvan Police Station was operationalized earlier this year and work continues apace towards the completion of the Roxborough Police Station, which is currently 76 per cent complete. Construction has commenced on the Roxborough Fire Station at a cost of approximately \$45 million and a site for a new fire station in Black

Rock, has been identified. These projects are expected to be completed by July and September, 2020, respectively. Further, conceptual designs are currently being prepared for the construction of a new prison in Tobago.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.9 There has also been ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs with regard to the refurbishment of the Dwight Yorke Stadium and a number of other related initiatives. I am pleased to report that the stadium is at 90 per cent completion and is expected to be handed over by September of this year.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 7.10 The Assembly also continues to collaborate with WASA through the Ministry of Public Utilities on a number of projects. These include the desilting of the Hillsborough Dam and the construction of a Southwest Waste Water Treatment Plant. Preparatory works are underway for the Dam, while the Plant is 90 per cent complete.
- 7.11 The Assembly also continues to work alongside the Central Government on the construction of the new terminal for the ANR Robinson International Airport at Crown Point, and the construction of a marina on the island. Both these projects will greatly impact the lives of all Tobagonians and the long-term viability of the island's tourism sector.

## **8 Conclusion**

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 8.1 As I seek to conclude today's budget presentation, I wish to reaffirm the commitment of this Administration to the development of Tobago and the improvement in the quality of life of all our citizens. We have an audacious, yet attainable programme of work to take the island's development forward. Taking our development to the next level requires leadership, vision, tenacity and commitment. We possess these qualities. What we now require, is for everyone to work together to advance our island's development agenda and work selflessly towards achieving this goal. We cannot allow narrow partisan interests and personal aggrandizement to compromise our island's socio-

economic development. We must at all times envisage the bigger picture! Tobagonians are known to be hard working, productive, diligent and patriotic. These are the attributes that our island requires at this time to move forward.

- 8.2 Notwithstanding some of the challenges we face, we in Tobago still have a lot to be thankful for. A cursory glance at regional events is instructive. The Venezuelan political and economic crisis, and the fiscal adjustment measures underway in Barbados serve as sobering reminders. We must have a focused, positive outlook as we take stock of our abundant blessings. At this time, more than ever, we need to draw on our inner strength and tenacity as a people. If we do, I have no doubt, that collectively we will enjoy the growth and prosperity we seek. This is not the time for grandstanding, showmanship and divisiveness, nor is it the time to seek to score cheap political points at the expense of Tobago's development.

- 8.3 Fortunately for us, we have a Central Government that is committed to the development of Tobago, and respects our aspirations and the institution that is the THA. We continue to collaborate with the Central Government on a number of developmental projects that will bring significant social and economic benefits to our island. Notwithstanding our disappointment occasioned by the loss of the Sandals opportunity, we remain committed to working with the Central Government to stimulate foreign direct investment in Tobago. Our island is open for business and this is the message we must all send loud and clear.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 8.4 This has been another auspicious occasion. On behalf of the Chief Secretary, all the Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the THA, I thank our audience both within and without the Chamber and the people listening, for your time and attention. I wish to inform this Honourable House as well as our listening and viewing public, that all the Budget documents will be available online on the THA website for ongoing review and comments. May God continue to bless all of us, and may God continue to bless the people of Tobago and the twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Presiding Officer,

- 8.5 I beg to move.









## **DIVISION OF FINANCE AND THE ECONOMY**

📍 VICTOR E. BRUCE FINANCIAL COMPLEX

6-10 POST OFFICE STREET, SCARBOROUGH 900212, TOBAGO

☎ 868-639-4412 | FAX 868-639-4412 EXT 6700

📘 Division of Finance and the Economy

📺 Division of Finance and the Economy

🌐 [www.fte.tha.gov.tt](http://www.fte.tha.gov.tt)

