



A Message from the Honourable Marlene McDonald, Minister of Public Administration for United Nations Public Service Day 2019



**Minister of Public Administration,
the Honourable Marlene McDonald**

On the occasion of Public Service Day 2019, I am honoured, as the Minister of Public Administration to extend warm greetings and convey my deepest appreciation to all Public Officers in Trinidad and Tobago. As a nation, we are thankful for your dedication and commitment to providing service to this nation's citizens.

Recognising the significant role of the public service and its institutions in securing economic development and prosperity, June 23rd has been designated United Nations Public Service Day since 2003. Since 2012, Trinidad and Tobago, through the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) has been part of this global observance which acknowledges the work of public officers and the contributions of the public service to the development process including the realisation of the 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs).

This year's theme is, 'Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through effective Delivery of Services, Innovative Transformation and Accountable Institutions.' It recognises that in the 21st Century, public institutions need to inculcate innovation and transformation in developing and delivering services that are not only timely and responsive to the needs of citizens but are informed by the principles of accountability, inclusion and transparency.

The theme resonates very strongly with the Ministry of Public Administration which has responsibility for Public Service Transformation and National Information

and Communication Technology (NICT). These areas constitute two critical success factors within the National Development Strategy, Vision 2030 as noted in Themes II and III: "Delivering Good Governance and Service Excellence" and Improving Productivity Through Quality Infrastructure And Transportation".

Thus, the assignment of these two areas of responsibility to MPA, were not by mere fancy, but rather through a purposeful act which recognised that public institutions would have to be strengthened and become more citizen/customer-centric. Additionally, in the Information Age, technology, particularly ICT, is an enabler that can transform the delivery of public goods and services and contribute to institutional strengthening and capacity building. In such a context, effective service delivery, informed by the needs and priorities of citizens, would be executed by an efficient public sector within an integrated and coordinated government structure. The right people doing the right jobs, at the right time.

We have not yet arrived at this ideal location but we are working assiduously to get there. Traditionally, the public service is seen as a passive vehicle for executing government policy as mandated by legislation. However, in this new age, the calls for effective and efficient service delivery from citizens and business cannot be ignored. To this end, the Ministry through its Public Service Transformation Agenda has identified a series of key goals and deliverables that will bring about significant, transformational change in public service operations.

One such goal is to leverage ICT as both a significant sector that offers opportunities for economic growth and diversification and as a cross-cutting enabler of sustainable development that affects all other sectors. This is captured in the National Information and Communications Technology (NICT) Plan 2018-2022, called the ICT Blueprint which also serves as the digital enabler of Vision 2030. The Plan provides for a more collaborative and coordinated approach to ICT development and management that will facilitate improvements in government's business operations and deliver customer satisfaction.

Another key area being addressed by the Ministry is work force improvement through provision of employee skills development

and training. The Public Service Academy provides learning and development solutions that build the capacity of public officers and public service organisations while promoting the values and culture of service delivery excellence. Programmes and courses offered by the Academy are tailored to meet the needs of a modern public service. One such example is the Academy's Executive Development Programme (EDP) which places importance on the development of leadership competencies for Senior Officers in the Public Service.

A significant characteristic of a modern public service is the effective management of employees in Ministries, Departments and Agencies. To this end, my Ministry will be implementing a Human Resource Modernisation (HRM) Standardisation project aimed at increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the human resource function throughout the public service. This project will bring about changes to the operations of HRM Systems through increasing the use of the Integrated Human Resources Information Systems (iHRIS) software in the daily operations of HR units. Such changes, will see improvements in the way employees personal and job data is captured and maintained and provide for a quick analysis of leave eligibility and accurate reporting on discipline and grievances matters.

As Minister, I am confident that the dedicated and successful pursuit of MPA's core mandate will contribute to the creation of an effective and digitally-enabled Public Service which can serve as a key component of the supporting foundation upon which a globally competitive economy will be built and the well-being of all citizens realised.

Times have changed and today the very concept of a public service is facing its sternest test as people around the world increasingly demand quality and value for money from their public institutions. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. For, if we are truly to achieve the objectives laid out in this year's theme it will require the combined efforts of every one of us who work under the banner of the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago; and the support of those to whom services are provided.

Happy Public Service Day 2019!