



ADDRESS

BY

THE HONOURABLE MAXIE CUFFIE, MP

**MINISTER OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

TOUR OF THE TAMANA INFOTECH PARK

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 10TH, 2017

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to the Minister of Trade and Industry for the invitation to be here this morning to explore the possibilities that the Tamana Intech Park presents not just to my constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo or to the East/West Corridor but to Trinidad and Tobago. I wish to commend her drive to make this happen and to ensure that this technology park that is so desperately needed as one plank of our diversification effort, becomes a reality.

I also want to salute the vision of Professor Ken Julien, who has worked tirelessly on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago in various stages of our industrial development and is here again when we are again desperately in the need of his expertise.

This is the vision that brought industrial development to central Trinidad and the areas around Pt Lisas, Couva North and South and Pointe-a-Pierre, and is now poised to do the same for the communities of La Horquetta/Talparo, Toco/Sangre Grande, Arima, D'Abadie/O'Meara, Lopinot/Bon Air West and Cumuto/Manzanilla.

For those of us who understand what Pt. Lisas meant to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, it is easy to see how this Tamana Intech Park, properly managed and monetized, could lead us out of the doldrums of an economic downturn.

We are all acutely aware that this is the most pressing economic and social issue of our time: our economy is evolving in a way that will make it more and more difficult

for people with lower levels of education to find jobs and support themselves.

While it was never envisaged as the single solution to all our economic challenges, this Tamana Intech Park represents a significant thrust in the direction of economic diversification.

This can be our Silicon Valley, where innovation and ingenuity can abound, where creativity and collaboration would collide to produce new, high-paying, sustainable careers for a population that was being gifted, simultaneously, with the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

This national University, with a campus less than 15 minutes away from this location, with programmes and courses which are markedly different from what is being

offered at UWI, was always expected to have a symbiotic relationship with this Park.

I feel proud that the Tamana Park is located in the Constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo which I now have the privilege to serve, and is also surrounded by the Constituencies of Toco/Sangre Grande, Arima, and D'Abadie/O'Meara and Cumuto/Manzanillo.

This technology park is not just important to me as a Member of Parliament, but also as the Minister with responsibility for the Telecommunications and the development of information technology.

In this regard, I can confirm that the government is refining several proposals that will bring major investments to this

technology park and further details will be announced in the not too distant future.

More than a decade ago, Clive Humby made headlines when he declared that “data is the new oil.” It is a great metaphor – just like oil, in its rawest form, data is almost useless. But when it is refined it can be turned into something much more valuable. With the amount of data that we are all producing today, and that this Intech Park has the capacity to produce, we believe we are sitting on a huge reserve of untapped wealth. Indeed, I make bold to say that data will be our new currency.

This space has the potential to continue the transformation of every aspect of business, of government, of society, and our daily lives. What we need is the perseverance and the

industry to make it happen. This technology park was never meant to be a facility in isolation.

This facility, along with the Manzanilla to Toco highway and the resulting business activity will see the creation of a new town with new opportunities in areas that were predominantly rural.

With this massive infrastructure already in place, the Government remains committed to seeing this project through to the end. This is but one phase, but there are many other facets to this park that must still be built.

I want to give the assurance today that this Government's commitment is not only to the completion of this project, but to opening up as well this entire north-eastern region of Trinidad and Tobago.

Cabinet colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I am extremely elated by what I have seen here today. Indeed, we all are, because it speaks to the realization of a vision long held by this Administration to diversify our economy away from the traditional oil and gas, to create highly-paid sustainable jobs of sufficient quantities to significantly impact the lives of persons in communities around the country.

I wish to thank the representatives of eTeck and the Ministry of Trade and Industry for allowing us this opportunity today. If data is the new oil, then Wallerfield, as the wider area is more commonly known, is the most promising field in Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you.