

The Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

**The Hon. Maxie Cuffie, Minister of Public
Administration and Communications, M.P. La
Horquetta / Talparo**

**Date: Tuesday November 29, 2016
Venue: Conference Room, Level 7 NALIS**

SALUTATIONS:

Ms. Joan Mendez, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of
Public Administration & Communications

Mr. Kurt Meyers, Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry
of Public Administration & Communications

Ms. Denise Duncan, Deputy Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Public Administration & Communications

Ms. Esther LeGendre, Chairman, iGovTT

Mrs. Frances Correia, General Manager Microsoft West
Indies (English, French, Dutch Caribbean)

Specially Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

It is a pleasure to address you this morning as the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, as a key facilitator of this agreement, makes yet another stride forward into an era of public service transformation that is accentuated by prudent fiscal management.

These deliberations towards this new, lower cost Microsoft Agreement have been one of the most critical and challenging since the inaugural Government enterprise wide use of the Microsoft suite of products and services began in 1999.

It would be short-sighted to only view these negotiations with Microsoft through the tactical lens of price, terms and conditions of software procurement.

There was much more at stake, even while we aggressively pursued lower pricing, and while we sought to ensure the continuity of Government business.

We simply could no longer afford to have all Government agencies gaining access to Microsoft Enterprise Client Access Licences or ECAL. A traditional avenue of wastage occurred from procuring software products and services that are not homogeneously used or needed across Government Ministries, departments and agencies.

The severe fiscal challenges facing this Administration are well known. Being fully transparent, I acknowledge that initially serious consideration was given to not pursuing a new Microsoft Enterprise Agreement at all. However, this Government is not short sighted and will never pursue short term expediency to the detriment of progress on meaningful National ICT goals.

Instead the Cabinet approved negotiation team, comprised entirely of officers of the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications and iGovtt focused on eliminating waste, corruption and software licence mismanagement. This negotiations team's relentless pursuit of product optimization and singular focus on ensuring value for money, will result in annual cost savings of US\$3.7 or TT \$25 million a year over the life of this new Agreement.

Notwithstanding these major reductions in the annual expenditure on Microsoft products and services, it must be acknowledged that at an annual cost of US\$4.2 million per year or TT\$28.6 million over a three (3) year period, this expenditure is by no means insignificant.

The last three-year Microsoft Enterprise Agreement cost US\$40 million or TT\$272 million more than this one.

Those savings could fund the full development programme of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development for a year.

The signing of this three (3) year Microsoft Enterprise Agreement or MEA secures an approximate 20% discount on the full range of Microsoft products and services over the life of the Agreement. These discounted prices are also locked in for that period, regardless of any increases in Microsoft's retail pricing.

Therefore, Government will not be subject to any price variation due to market forces during the three-year period. This price freeze facility is a source of significant national cost savings.

During the life of the MEA, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies will be able to access upgrades to the latest versions of Microsoft software and operating systems without additional Government expenditure. This ensures that value for past expenditure on licence acquisition is realized.

While we must recognize the productivity gains that we have made, ably assisted by Microsoft solutions from 1999 to now, we remain challenged in making meaningful progress towards infusing ICTs into improving public service delivery.

It is clear that access to technology tools while important, by itself, technology is simply an enabler which must be tied to an overarching vision and people centred implementation of holistic programmes.

Ultimately, the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications works to ensure that Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies can fully leverage the major information communication technology developments that are unfolding globally, to deliver effective, end to end Public Service delivery that reduces the time and the stress spent transacting with Government.

Despite the high level of expenditure in national ICT infrastructure, enterprise software and platforms our progress as a nation has been hampered by the legacy, paper based processes that permeate the public service.

Progress on the legislative reform needed to digitize and virtualize these traditional frameworks, has been painfully slow. We cannot hope to remove the much criticized Government inefficiencies without public sector transformation.

This is the world of the eGeneration.

We are encouraged by what has been achieved, over the last decade by our Latin American counterparts Chile and Mexico in the area of eGovernment. It is not surprising that their advances in their infusion of ICTs into public life, has contributed to a corresponding rapid escalation of their rankings in global, developmental indices.

Recognizing the significant Government investment that is being made to acquire Microsoft licences, the issue of accounting for these software assets becomes even more critical.

The Government is the single largest collector and processor of information in our country as well as the largest buyer of ICT software. In the past, our software asset management practices have been unsatisfactory.

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This situation must be improved through greater awareness of software asset tracking systems. As such, the National Information Communications Technology Co. Ltd (iGovTT) has been mandated to provide astute contract management services to ensure that, the Microsoft licences are acquired, deployed and managed in accordance with best practices.

I would like to thank the Microsoft team for their demonstrated understanding of the fiscal constraints that the Ministry now operates under and their willingness to continue to partner with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the benefit of all its citizens.

In closing, I wish to emphasize that the signing of this lower cost MEA today, epitomises what can be accomplished when we eliminate waste and are inspired to negotiate creatively in the face of fiscal constraints.

A tremendous amount of strategic planning is ongoing at this Ministry. In the coming weeks, I look forward to sharing more on these national initiatives aimed at significantly improving the way the Public Service innovates, the way we work and the way that we live in our blessed nation.