



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  

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**Ministry of Public Administration and Communications**

STATEMENT BY

THE HON. MAXIE CUFFIE - MINISTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

ON THE OCCASION OF

WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY 2016

*“ICT entrepreneurship to create social impact”*

It is indeed a pleasure for me, as line Minister for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Telecommunications, to join the 193 countries of the United Nations’ International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in commemorating World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, the theme of which is **“ICT Entrepreneurship for Social Impact”**.

ICT is transforming the way that we in Trinidad and Tobago and the entire world, interact, recreate and conduct business. In fact, the successful adoption and use of new technologies are critical to developing a more competitive economy. If we are to examine the economies of developing and developed countries, we would see that they have been transformed due in great measure to the incorporation of ICTs by the private sector, as well as the state sector.

Many local businesses may have already incorporated ICTs into their operations; however, some small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and even some of the larger entities, are still reluctant to embrace new forms of technology. This is due in great part to some of the barriers to the adoption of e-business methods. However, as a country, all is not lost as we have been making small but important steps by incorporating ICTs into the entrepreneurial process: TT BizLink, FairShare and the Community-Based Incubators (IBIS) are examples of these platforms.

A strong governmental commitment to ICT is a critical element which is needed to accelerate entrepreneurship and innovation. This is a commitment that this administration takes seriously and a commitment on which we intend to deliver. The transformation of Trinidad and Tobago into a more dynamic, knowledge-based society, driven through the innovative use of ICTs to enhance the social and economic development of our people, remains a major priority for us.

The initiation of the free island-wide public broadband wireless network, starting with free public hotspots in popular areas by the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications in the next few months, will not only reduce the digital divide by providing greater access but will foster the creation of a knowledge-based, information driven society.

The economic reality of our country has therefore created an ideal opportunity for citizens, especially youths with innovative ideas to enhance their business capabilities through creative and cost effective means. The accelerated growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) locally, will indeed benefit Trinidad and Tobago as we seek to diversify our economy in a meaningful way.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Communications is committed to the promotion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) usage in order to facilitate entrepreneurship goals. Entrepreneurs are therefore encouraged to make use of new technologies to develop their skills and business opportunities which can create a catalyst for economic sustainability of Trinidad and Tobago and redound socially and economically to the benefit of Trinidad and Tobago.

*Hon. Maxie Cuffie, M.P.*  
*Minister of Public Administration and Communications*

#### **About World Telecommunication and Information Society Day**

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) has been celebrated annually on May 17 since 1969. It commemorates the establishment of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865. The purpose of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day is to help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide. It is envisioned that activities conducted by member states in celebration of WTISD will contribute towards building political momentum in mobilising support for SMEs and start-ups in order to catalyse progress in achieving international sustainable development goals (SDGs).

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