



## Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

### Ministry of Public Administration and Communications

**February 12, 2017**

The Editor:

#### **At last, interest in public service reform**

I am grateful for the interest in public service reform as evidenced by your editorial of February 11 under the headline, 'Time for transformation', which bemoaned the fact that: "After 17 months presumably of learning the ropes, no all-embracing programme for bringing the public service to life into the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be identified for public digestion and discussion."

The amazing thing about this statement was that just last week from February 1-2 a two-day workshop was held addressing this very issue. At that workshop the heads of all the service commissions: the Public Service Commission, the Teaching Service Commission and the Judicial and Legal Service Commission (there was no representative from the Police Service Commission but an apology was sent citing a previous engagement) were present, when I delivered the opening remarks on the reform process. There were presentations from the Ministry's Permanent Secretary and representatives from the Institute of Public Administration of Canada and Deloitte and Touche who were concluding a consultancy on public service transformation based on the document "Institutional Strengthening of Service Commissions Department (Final Report)."

All media were invited to the opening of the two day conference. Copies of my address at the opening which outlined the direction of the government, were given to every media house present, and a press release sent following the opening which summarised my thoughts on the matter. My fifteen (15) minute presentation merited two paragraphs in the Express and was largely ignored by the other media.

I have spoken extensively at every opportunity afforded me on the issue of public service transformation, including in the Budget Debate, although admittedly without exciting the news editors who have failed to publish my many pronouncements on the matter of public service transformation.

Even more shocking is the Editorial's allusion to the "lackadaisical attitudes and antiquated systems" at the Licensing Office when just three weeks ago (January 14), the Minister of Works and Transport unveiled a new system that will see drivers' permits being delivered in two minutes and gave a time line for the end of March 2017 for online access to Licensing Office application data and the processing of online applications by the end of July. I can testify to the fact that all the media, including the Express were present.

Government's thrust for public service reform is to place more services online while reforming procedures and processes to ensure faster delivery of public services and delegating functions now performed by the Service Commissions to the Ministries, Departments and Agencies. We are also



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fast tracking the operationalizing of the Electronic Transaction Act to facilitate online transactions. In fact, I recently travelled to Chile to receive an award for the Single Electronic Window, which began in 2009 and is operated by the Ministry of Trade as a demonstration of the direction in which the delivery of public services will go. ICT is a major element of the plan.

This direction has been shared with the media in releases, news conferences and speeches delivered at various events. See below the media releases sent out since I took over the Public Administration portfolio in March 2016:

- March 22, 2016
- July 21, 2016
- July 27, 2016
- August 2, 2016
- September 27, 2016
- December 1, 2016
- December 16, 2016
- December 19, 2016
- December 30, 2016 – End of year message
- February 1, 2017

Speeches given on public sector reform:

- The opening of a conference themed “Exploring Innovation in Transactions & Financing in the Caribbean” on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016
- At the launch of Public Service Week 2016 on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016
- At the formal handover of the Ministry of Education Tower, St. Vincent Street on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- Keynote address at the launch of the World Economic Forum on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- Launch of TT WiFi at City Gate on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- Contribution to the National Budget 2016/2017
- Address at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Health, Safety, Security and Environment (HSSE) Conference and Exhibition on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016
- Address at the signing of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Given that many of the events were either not covered or reported by your newspaper even when press releases were sent, I can only conclude that the Express really has no interest in the matter of public service transformation (despite your editorial) or that the author is not cognisant of what goes in or on at the newspaper.

The speeches, press releases, photos and plans can be found at [mpac.gov.tt](http://mpac.gov.tt) and [news.gov.tt](http://news.gov.tt).



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Respectfully,  
Honourable Maxie Cuffie  
Minister of Public Administration and Communications  
Member of Parliament for La Horquetta/Talparo