

**2016**



**WELCOME REMARKS AT  
THE “EMPOWERING THE  
TOURISM  
ENTREPRENEUR”  
SYMPOSIUM 2016**

**Delivered by Mr. Warren Solomon  
Ag. Chief Executive Officer  
Tourism Development Company  
Limited**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2016  
Port of Spain Ballroom  
Hyatt Regency Trinidad**

## Salutations

- The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe, Minister of Tourism
- Mrs. Vidiah Ramkhelawan, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism
- Mrs. Cheryl Ann Solomon, Administrator, Division of Tourism and Transportation, Tobago House of Assembly
- Mr. Brian D. Frontin, Chief Executive Officer, Trinidad Hotels Restaurants and Tourism Association
- Members of the Board of Directors of the TDC
- Management and Staff of the TDC and Ministry of Tourism
- Heads of Tourism Stakeholder Organisations
- Industry Partners
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning.



It is my pleasure to welcome you to People, Productivity and Sustainability Symposium – Tourism is My Business. Tourism is indeed my business, your business, our business and I am happy to see a full house today.

Do you feel that? The atmosphere is always different in the presence of a group of entrepreneurs. There is always a sense of anticipation and excitement. Entrepreneurship after all, is the lifeblood of the tourism industry. Without your vision, without your ideas, without your fervour, without your diligence and commitment to the effort it takes to achieve success, the industry would not grow or develop to achieve its full potential.

Particularly as the spotlight has now been trained on tourism as a potential avenue of economic diversification for the country, it is critical that we mind our own business and really demonstrate that



tourism indeed a viable option for national revenue generation and foreign exchange earnings.

In order to enable and achieve this, the Tourism Development Company is committed to supporting tourism entrepreneurs in numerous ways, including the provision of marketing support, investment incentives and initiatives to strengthen tourism related businesses, such as this symposium.

Today's symposium is designed to further develop, support and strengthen you small tourism operators and entrepreneurs in your entrepreneurial journey. It is designed to boost creativity, innovation, and enhance our ability to adapt to changes in the global and economic environment. We have handpicked some notable tourism experts from around the region to share their knowledge, skills and experience with you, and I am certain that you and your businesses – and by extension our national tourism



industry, would benefit tremendously from adapting what you will learn today for your business.

As the global tourism industry grows, we have the opportunity to increase our visitor numbers. In 2015, global tourism grew at an average rate of 4.4% according to the World Tourism Organisation. The World Travel and Tourism Council has projected a 4% annual growth rate for 2016. What's interesting to note is that there was a 7% increase in visitors to the Caribbean in 2016 – that's almost twice the global average. Visitors are interested in the Caribbean.

However, they are not going to simply show up in Trinidad and Tobago without any efforts on our part. Tourism is a highly competitive multi-billion dollar industry and we have to make ourselves stand out and be noticed. We have to be strategic in our approach if we are to succeed. We are blessed with an abundance of natural, historical and cultural resources but we have to know



how to innovate, develop and package these into tourist products that travellers demand... we have to create and sell visitor experiences that give value for money.

As I close, I wish you a fruitful day of learning and networking. Just by your presence here today, your commitment to the industry is evident and I assure you that the Tourism Development Company is also committed to empowering you as we all do our part to develop Trinidad and Tobago as a world class tourist destination.

Thank you.