

2016



WELCOME REMARKS

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

**Society of American Travel Writers
Freelance Council Meeting
September 13th, 2016
9:00am
La Boucan**

- The Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe, Minister of Tourism
- Mrs. Vidiah Ramkhelawan, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism
- Mrs. Satie Jamraj- Marimuthu, Deputy Permanent Secretary(Ag.), Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. Richard Duncan, Chairman of the Board of Directors and other Board members of the TDC
- Members of the Freelance Council for the Society of American Travel Writers
- Management and Staff of the TDC and Ministry of Tourism
- Industry Partners
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen



Good Morning.

It is my pleasure to bring greetings on behalf of the Tourism Development Company, and it's truly an honour to host this prestigious meeting once more in our beautiful twin island republic. The last time we hosted the SATW in Trinidad & Tobago was 18 years ago and since that time we've gotten a little older and little wiser and our wrinkles add a ton load of character. I think we laugh harder than anyone else in the Caribbean; we've certainly made celebrating an art form and we truly believe that life is for living!

In any Caribbean island that you might visit, you'd hear phrases like "this is how the Caribbean used to be", or "this is the true Caribbean". But what images do the average people from your part of the world conjure up when they think of the Caribbean? Chances are it's those clichéd sun, sea and sand ones that actually do make for some very attractive postcards. Don't get me wrong...some of my best vacations have been in the Caribbean and many times I

picture myself in one of those postcards. However, we believe that our dual island destination provides visitors with an eclectic blend of sights, sounds and tastes that you won't find anywhere else.

Over the next few days, you will experience the vibrancy and beauty of Trinidad and Tobago. You'll get a taste of our amazing biodiversity, sites and attractions and no doubt, our zest for life. We'll even try to get you to become experts in "the art of liming", which I'm sure has already been explained to you. Let me tell you something: **Trinis love to lime!** We lime at the beach, at rivers, we lime at the side of the road on a road trip, we lime at each other's homes, at sporting events, parties, bars, lounges and restaurants – which is why you'll find some of the Caribbean's best nightlife here in Trinidad and Tobago.

And no lime is complete without food and drinks. In addition to our award winning rums and beers, Trinidad and Tobago's cuisine is a delicious and diverse fusion of our cultural heritage. Influences from our African, Indian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Amerindian and European settlers have fused in the most delectable ways to produce dishes to delight the most discerning of taste buds.

Our multi-cultural heritage has also heavily influenced our celebrations and festivals. I'm sure you would have heard about our spectacular annual Carnival and you've probably heard of some of the world's bigger Carnivals, like Rio and - for the Americans in the room - your own New Orleans Mardi Gras. But what makes ours more exhilarating is the fact that it's by the people, of the people and for the people. Apart from the intricate and colourful costumes, you can also experience the thrill of hearing steel orchestras with up to 120 players perform at the Panorama

Competition, which is an all-day lime with a few thousand of your closest friends. You'll hear more about Carnival and its history a little later on.

There is truly never a dull moment in Trinidad and Tobago, and having glimpsed your itinerary for the week, I'm sure you'll agree.

As I close, I wish you a successful council meeting. A warm welcome again to Trinidad and Tobago and I look forward to reading about your experiences in our destination in the coming months.

Thank you.