



## Remarks

To be delivered by

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**Trinidad and Tobago Chamber  
of Industry and Commerce**

**THE LAUNCH OF TSTT e-TENDER SERVICE APPLICATION  
MONDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2012  
LEON AGOSTINI CONFERENCE ROOM  
CHAMBER BUILDING  
8:00am – 11:00am**

Good morning to all

On behalf of our Board of Directors of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce, it gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to the Chamber and to this morning's session, hosted by TSTT, as they launch their "e-Tender Service Application". A special good morning again to the Executives and representatives of TSTT, and we thank you for choosing to launch your new service here at the Chamber.

We congratulate you on this new initiative which will seek to give a clearer picture to our Membership, the wider business community and the public at large of the benefits to be gained from TSTT's e-Tender Service.

Earlier this year, the Chamber also partnered with another State enterprise - the Water and Sewage Authority - to bring more clarity about the Authority's procurement processes and practices to the business community. Now, we are equally pleased to once again collaborate with another arm of the Government - this time TSTT - to showcase this innovative service which will be for the benefit of business in Trinidad and Tobago. Any positive move to benefit business in T&T is certainly of interest to us!

This Chamber supports all attempts at developing a process to update and reform the system by which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and its agencies purchase goods and services on behalf of the people of

Trinidad and Tobago. Procurement in our nation has evolved over a number of years; but, unfortunately, we have not seen the procurement process keeping abreast of these changes, at least, not as rapidly as we would like. We believe that change to the current system is necessary to **improve efficiency**, ensure **equality of access**, **improve transparency and oversight**, and **restrict opportunities for corruption** of the processes, thereby benefiting ALL people of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Chamber has been, and continues to be, an avid champion of Public Procurement reform. We believe that this is critical, and modernisation of existing systems will bring significant benefit to our local businesses. Greater accountability throughout the process will ensure adherence to good procurement practice. Increased transparency will allow greater public oversight of procurement activity and also ensure broader access to procurement activities. Oftentimes, our Small and Medium Enterprises, and even our Micro Enterprises, are usually

discouraged from competing for contracts with State agencies for a variety of reasons. Current tendering processes are often seen as bureaucratic, complex and costly, and can be accused of favouring only larger suppliers. It is our expectation that the new system of e-tendering being launched today by TSTT will lend itself to a more **open and equal** process for all businesses. No matter how large or small the supplying company may be, all businesses are expected to have an equal opportunity to compete on a level playing field. In addition, the ability to challenge contract awards with due cause will create more public confidence and promote adherence to the principles and guidelines of e-tendering.

What you are about to learn this morning from the presentations made by TSTT, is that e-Tendering is an invaluable tool that will revolutionise the way that business is conducted in Trinidad and Tobago. This is especially important as we seek to improve our nation's rank in "Ease of Doing Business" in the Global

Competitiveness Index. From the Chamber's own understanding, the process of e-tendering has the capacity to effect considerable savings in terms of efficiency and time, while upholding the values of Accountability, Transparency and Value for Money.

The utilisation of modern technology in our nation's tendering process is, in our view, long overdue, and we applaud TSTT for harnessing the technologies available to bring T&T into conformity with international best practice. Not only do we expect that this e-Tender Service will provide substantial savings to companies, but it will also take procurement to another level, ensuring that private sector organisations AND the State both get Value for Money. The technology also can allow all potential bidders, no matter where they may be located geographically, to review Tenders, submit bids, and even make payments online, all from the comfort of their own offices, or from any location where there is an Internet connection.

In closing, I would like to echo some important sentiments expressed by the Chamber's Senior Vice President at that session we conducted with WASA earlier this year; sentiments that are also certainly applicable today: the Chamber advocates that a more transparent and productive procurement system in T&T also requires a more competitive private sector. We all are aware that the economy is not what it was just a few short years ago and there is a visible slowdown in business opportunities being presented. So while we may lobby for a proper, more modernised framework regarding the public tendering and procurement process, at the same time, we should not realistically expect tenders to be awarded to a company solely based on the fact that it is a local company, regardless of whether or not it has the proven expertise or human, capital and technical know-how to complete the proposed project. As with any tendering process, whether online or offline, your company will be competing against others that may have the same or even better qualities and

possibly lower prices for the same tenders – and the reality is that some of these companies may be foreign-based firms. Therefore, being more competitive is key and as we all place much more emphasis on Value for Money, I cannot overemphasise the importance you must place on having that competitive edge to not only win contracts, but also develop a reputation as a company that offers such Value.

We now look forward to hearing more from TSTT on their e-Tender Service Application. Let me again thank the leadership of TSTT for hosting today's session, and also thank the members of the business community for attending, as this demonstrates each of our commitment to good corporate governance and continuous improvement in doing business in Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you.