



Opening Remarks
Delivered By
Mr. Moonilal Lalchan
President
Trinidad & Tobago Chamber of Industry
& Commerce

Bridging

The Labour-Management Divide

Friday 10th April 2013

Leon Agostini, Conference Hall

Chamber Building

- **Minister of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development - The Honourable Errol McLeod**
- **Independent Senator - Helen Drayton**

- **Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development – Mr. Carl Francis**
- **International Expert on Labour Relations - Dr. Michael Macoby**
- **Chairman ECA - Keston Nancoo**
- **Managing Director HRC Associates - Hollick Rajkumar**
- **Chief Executive Officer, TT Chamber - Catherine Kumar –**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Specially invited guests**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning and welcome to all of you to this morning's session on Bridging The Labour-Management Divide.

This morning I want to talk to you a little about

T.- -R.--U.--S.--T. – TRUST.

Truth

Resulting from an

Umbrella of

Strategic

Talks

TRUST is central to any potentially great relationship and particularly so in labour-management negotiations. When achieved, it promotes goodwill and a willingness to collaborate towards a mutually-beneficial and desired outcome. When trust is broken however, this can lead to a culture of resentment, barriers to efficiency and reduced productivity. Breach of trust is perhaps the single most telling catalyst which leads to the start of the collapse of management-labour relations.

What do stakeholders want? Govt strives for a society with a prosperous citizenry. Labour wants improved earnings for a better standard of living and Private Sector advocates for improved work ethic and increased productivity levels. To achieve any of these desired objectives you must have a collaborative approach to labour management relations.

There must be a willingness to share information. If we do not recognize that our ability to cope with the economic challenges is directly related to our

ability to work together, we will not be able to succeed. We will have a situation where we will not be able to hold our own markets neither will we be able to sustain competitiveness further afield. We then will continue to experience the wanton effects of crime at both the white and blue collar levels going up and up and up, forcing society itself to unravel at the seams.

In my inaugural speech at the Chamber's Annual Meeting and Business Luncheon, I focused on "Building Bridges for the Common Good

of businesses and, by extension, the national community of Trinidad and Tobago". I emphasized that our vision for the Chamber is that we must play a role in building the bridge that connects the many stakeholders among the public sector, civil society and private sector.

I stated the need to reinforce or create multiple bridges that will enhance our linkages with government, State agencies, academia and our friends

among other business service organizations.

As we CREATE these multiple bridges they must be able to withstand the test of time founded on transparency, good governance, and accountability.

The Chamber will continue to work with government, business, and labour as we do our part in revitalising the economy.

Minister of Labour, the Honourable Errol McLeod, former leader of what is arguably this country's most powerful

trade union, has stated “Productivity, commitment and professionalism must dominate our work ethic...”

The responsibility for enhancing competitiveness cannot however, rest solely with the State, while other social partners limit themselves to narrow, insular concerns. Nor can any national ambition to advance our country be realised by antagonism and confrontation among the very parties charged with making it happen.

As I leave you with these thoughts, I ask that you think critically about the future of our twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and take this golden opportunity to communicate with Dr. Macoby during the Q&A period. Responses to the questions asked today may become policy positions tomorrow.

I Thank you.