



Welcome Remarks

To be delivered by

Catherine Kumar

CEO

Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce

PRESS CONFERENCE LAUNCH
CARIBBEAN SME BUSINESS CONFERENCE
'INNOVATION IN BUSINESS - THE CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE'
LEON AGOSTINI CONFERENCE HALL
CHAMBER BUILDING
10:00AM – 11:00AM

Firstly, allow me to thank the media for coming out this morning as we launch the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce NOVA Committee's Biennial SME Conference 2014.

On July 9th and 10th, 2014, our NOVA Committee will host our SME Conference entitled "INNOVATION IN BUSINESS - THE CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE". Our NOVA Chairman, Jerome Chambers, will give you more details on the Conference itself; however as CEO of the Chamber, I must express my sincere delight that we are able to bring to you again a Conference focused on the advancement of Small and Medium Enterprises.

With over 60 percent of our membership comprised of SMEs, the Chamber has made SME development a priority, and one of our strategic areas of focus. It has been said in many fora, that SME growth and development is an important pillar in the growth and development of our national economy. This is evidenced by the fact that, just as with many countries worldwide, SMEs account for thousands of companies operating in T&T. They employ a significant part of our labour force, and contribute over 20 percent of our GDP. We must therefore build structures that support their growth, and I use this opportunity to renew the Chamber's call for the review and enactment of the fiscal incentives for SMEs listing on the Stock Exchange to improve access to capital for SMEs.

Our SME Conference is a growing platform and opportunity for dynamic interaction among small and medium enterprises to acquire knowledge, source solutions for business enhancement and seize unparalleled opportunities in today's globalised economy. I am especially excited by this year's theme - "INNOVATION



IN BUSINESS - THE CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE". Oftentimes, we look externally for examples of successful entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs, not realising, or appreciating, that we have our own examples of sons and daughters of our soil, who are eminent business owners or leaders. It is so important, therefore, to have this Conference utilise the experience of our own nationals who have been locally, regionally, and internationally recognised for excellence in their respective fields. The cadre of speakers that our Committee has sourced for this Conference, is truly world-class and the Chamber is indeed honoured to have two of our esteemed speakers today. Joining us on Skype is Dr. Wayne Frederick, President of Howard University; and at our head table, Mr. Nigel Henry, Founder and Lead Analyst, Solutions by Stimulation.

On behalf of the T&T Chamber of Industry and Commerce, I thank you both for joining us this morning.

With that said, I wish to thank our NOVA Committee for once again embarking on this SME Conference and I am positive it will be a redounding success. I also want to encourage the members of the media present to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the Conference and please take advantage of the opportunity to speak directly to our two presenters. Growing our economy, growing our SME sector - this is the kind of positive news in business that we certainly hope will be disseminated to the public.

Thank you.