



Remarks

To be delivered by

Ms Catherine Kumar

CEO

Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry
and Commerce

**LAUNCH OF THE NEW GENERATION OF CAPE SUBJECTS
“ENTREPRENEURSHIP”
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
THURSDAY 15 MAY, 2014
AT THE LEON AGOSTINI CONFERENCE HALL, CHAMBER BUILDING
8:30AM – 10:30AM**

Good morning to all

On behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce, I wish to firstly thank CXC for partnering with the Chamber to launch the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination in Entrepreneurship.

When I first received the invitation, I saw that “a new generation of CAPE Subjects” was slated to be introduced in our schools, in several areas, and it was certainly pleasing to see that there will be a greater focus on developing the practical skills along with the theory within our secondary schools. We certainly need to prepare a new generation of students who will be entering companies or starting companies which are competing globally.

Recently, I attended a Foresighting workshop held by our Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, which was aimed at engaging both public and private sector stakeholders in initial discussions on the proposed national strategic development framework – the successor to the Medium-Term Policy Framework 2011 – 2014.

The Minister noted that we need new entrepreneurship and business creation coming out of the human wealth of the country. The Chamber fully endorses this statement.

This is why we are very pleased to see that CXC is introducing Entrepreneurship on its slate of CAPE subjects and the syllabus is geared to provide students with the mindset that supports creativity and innovation needed to transform ideas into ventures that create value and wealth.

For T&T to continue on our path to becoming the “Caribbean Economic Tiger”, we must have an education system that pays fundamental attention to education and focuses on the new skills which will become more in demand such as creativity, entrepreneurship, problem solving and critical thinking.

Does T&T have the capacity to develop these skills and sustain the high rates of innovation required? We say yes but the education curriculum must include the teaching of these skills. Today is a start, with this launch.

Business is about taking risks, and not all risks will result in success. However, ours is a culture which is notoriously risk-averse, and the Chamber, as a champion for Small and Medium Enterprise development, has called and will continue to call on the leaders of institutions to be more open to entrepreneurship.

Within our school systems as well, there will need to be a swift adaptation to this new subject. Our teachers and educators will also need to be adequately prepared to competently teach and evaluate the subject area of practical entrepreneurship.

We must also not forget that, as we prepare our students to face the realities of work-life, the process of education must also further strengthen their foundations in ethical, moral and civic values – all very much still necessary, and perhaps more so now in the 21st century business world.

And so, the Chamber endorses this move by the Caribbean Examination Council and our Ministry of Education to infuse Entrepreneurship as a subject in CXC's CAPE syllabus, as we strongly believe that we are now finally seeing the need met to expand the entrepreneurial foundation of our nation and fully develop our human resource base.

The Chamber expresses its own readiness to empower our nation's youth with entrepreneurial skills. For almost two decades, our Nova Committee has been conducting a student apprenticeship programme, called Jumpstart that encourages entrepreneurship and employment among our youth. In 2013 Jumpstart helped 81 school leavers from educational institutions across T&T to develop their skills and make that necessary transition from school to work life. This year we have incorporated a module on entrepreneurship recognising the need to build the appetite for risk taking in new business ventures. We have built strategic relationships with about sixteen secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago and we certainly see an opportunity for extending this relationship between successful businesses and secondary schools.

I would like to suggest that perhaps there may be some synergies here, and ways in which the Chamber and CXC can cooperate further-.

I want to therefore use this opportunity to encourage all of the members of our business community to take part in apprenticeship programmes for our youth, and provide our students with invaluable coaching and mentorship which will last them a lifetime. It is accepted practice in many countries that academic institutions partner with the business world to provide the forum for students to practice what they have learnt and so move from "theory to reality". Businesses, as well, can only stand to benefit in a number of ways as the young creative and

expansive minds bring new value to businesses and eventually allow these same students and workers to take the quantum leap and step into their own business.

With that said, ladies and gentlemen, I once again, on behalf of the Chamber, congratulate the Caribbean Examinations Council for bringing to fruition this new generation of CAPE subjects, and, in particular, introducing the subject of Entrepreneurship into our schools.

I look forward to seeing and hearing great things following this launch, and the Chamber stands ready to assist wherever we can.

I thank you.