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## **Welcome Remarks**

Delivered By

**Robert Trestrail**  
**Senior Vice President**  
Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of  
Industry and Commerce

**On the occasion of  
Opening Ceremony  
Business Opportunities Trinidad and Tobago  
(BizOppsTT) 2014  
Port of Spain Ballroom, Hyatt Regency  
Monday 17 + Tuesday 18 November, 2013  
9:00am**

## **SALUTATIONS**

**Good morning to all!**

**It is a great honour and privilege for me in my capacity as Senior Vice President of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce to welcome each and every one to the 2nd Annual Business Opportunities of Trinidad and Tobago – or BizOppsTT – Conference!**

**The Chamber is excited to host the BizOppsTT Conference 2014. This is considered the premier event in Trinidad and Tobago where business leaders, from start-ups, large-scale enterprises, State Officials and procurement experts have the opportunity to connect with the view to improving business relations and exploring future business development opportunities between public and private enterprises.**

**Many people think that opportunities for doing business with the State lie mainly within the construction sector, with little or no scope for other sectors. But the truth is, the State is the largest purchaser of goods and services, in every sector – from hospitality, to food and**

**beverage, advertising, facility management and maintenance, and stationery and other office supplies. The opportunities are endless.**

**The diversity of participants across various industries here today, reflects the need for such a forum and evidences that there is significant interest from suppliers and contractors to gain knowledge of tendering opportunities within the public sector. The demand by the business community for such a forum was recognized by the Chamber in 2012 when we received overwhelming response to smaller breakfast meetings showcasing opportunities for doing business with the State. Many of the attendees expressed appreciation for the meetings and the insights provided. Thus, we saw that is was**

**necessary to provide a comprehensive platform for business, especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises – or MSMEs – who may not be well positioned to gain better insight into the tendering processes and pre-qualification criteria of Government Ministries and State agencies.**

**So began BizOppsTT in 2013!**

**A primary tenant of The Chamber is ensuring that transparency and good governance is paramount to the way we do business. Year after year, we see the Global Competitive Indices continuing to rank Government Bureaucracy and Corruption as problematic factors for doing business in T&T. According to our own private sector, there is a great need to improve transparency and reduce the**

**perception of corruption in procurement practices. Transparency and good governance are both linked to business credibility, and will positively impact our national image on global markets, provide the framework to attract Foreign Direct Investment and ensure business stability and growth. It is therefore a critical component in moving Trinidad and Tobago toward a sustainable economy. In support of these two tenants is the need for proper Public Procurement Legislation.**

**A modern Public Procurement system plays such a critical role in the success of our Nation, the Chamber is very pleased this year to have the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development, Senator the Honourable Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie as our Feature Speaker at**

**the Conference. Under his stewardship of the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, the Honourable Minister has worked with organisations like this Chamber and the Joint Consultative Council for the Construction Industry, as part of the Joint Private Sector/Civil Society initiative, to develop the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property Bill.**

**The Chamber is of the view that the country CANNOT NOT wait any longer before adopting the proposed public procurement legislation. Mr. Minister, we certainly hope that we will see the Bill debated and passed into law in an expeditious manner, as this piece of Legislation will act as a future driver of innovation for all business and the public service.**

**Additionally, an improved Public Procurement environment will only help foster wider market uptake of innovative products and services. In this regard we want to urge those in authority to quickly adopt and promote the use of innovation-friendly procurement practices across ALL Government Ministries and State Agencies. We think that this will improve the public tendering process in two ways: Firstly, it will help to popularise the concept of innovation partnerships among private sector entities working together to develop innovative products or services which will have the benefit of cutting costs for the purchaser; and secondly it will increase the efficiency and transparency of the administrative processes typically used by both local and central public**

**procurement offices in preparing calls for tenders.**

**Ladies and gentlemen, as we developed the agenda for this Conference we were encouraged by the enthusiastic support by business, State Enterprises, and civil society for BizOppsTT 2014. In this regard I now recognise our Premier SME Development Partner – the FairShare Programme of the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development for their support of this years conference. Additionally I wish to recognise all of our other investors.**

**Our Gold Investors – DAVYN Limited and Microsoft**

**and our Silver Investors:**

**- Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago -**

**Piarco AeroPark**

- **Blink/Bmobile**
- **Export Import Bank of Trinidad and Tobago**
- **iGovTT**
- **L & S Surveying Services Limited**
- **Sagicor Life Inc.**
- **The Housing Development Corporation**
- **The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited and**
- **The Tourism Development Company Limited**

**I also wish to welcome and thank our esteemed panel of speakers who will be delivering some thought-provoking and informative presentations over the next two days.**

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**To the participants – I anticipate that the Conference and the information shared by our presenters will meet your needs and expectations. I also anticipate that you will make this more than just a two-day event, and truly utilise the networking opportunities to your long-term advantage.**

**With that said, I once again welcome all today and I wish each one of you an enjoyable and successful BIZOPPSTT 2014!**

**Thank You.**