



Opening and Welcome Remarks to be delivered by

Mr. Robert Trestrail

President, Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce

on the occasion of

Champions of Business 2016

Saturday November 12 2016

6.30 p.m. – 10.00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain

Salutations: (subject to change)

- Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Members of the Board of Directors of the T&T Chamber
- Former Presidents of the T&T Chamber
- Distinguished Inductees and Awardees
- Ms. Karen Darbasie, Group CEO, First Citizens
- Ms. Pria Narinesingh, EY Trinidad Country Managing Partner
- Other Representatives of our kind Corporate Investors
- Mr. Gabriel Faria, Chief Executive Officer of the T&T Chamber
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Evening.

On behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce, it is an honour to welcome you to this, the 2016 edition of our annual Champions of Business Induction Ceremony and Gala Cocktail Reception.

Ladies and gentlemen, Trinidad and Tobago's successes didn't happen overnight, and neither did they happen by accident. It all occurred because of the conviction that in this country hard work should be rewarded and that opportunity should be there for anybody who is willing to reach for it.

We have been confronted by the unstoppable and powerful external forces such as globalization, low oil prices and lower manufacturing costs by countries like China, India and Latin America.

Combined with our own economic constraints, these forces meant for many of you, the urgent need to restructure and to employ creative approaches to the way we do business.

And yet, here we are, in an atmosphere that is truly befitting of the esteemed awardees and guests in attendance, showcasing those who,

despite the challenges, have excelled and delivered exceptional performance in the sphere of business.

This evening, we will present awards in three categories; these are:

- The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce Business Hall of Fame;
- Internationally Known...T&T Owned Company of the Year, in an exclusive partnership with First Citizens;
- and the EY Entrepreneur of the Year™ (Master and Emerging).

Ladies and gentlemen, I am quite certain that many of you were heartened by the T&T Government's proposal to establish a mega resort in Tobago. Once executed properly, the initiative holds much promise for the continued development of tourism on the island, within the context of economic diversification for our country.

Not only were we excited by that prospect, but we were also intrigued by the formidable personalities at the helm of this massive project. There's no denying that they are among the Caribbean's most notable successes.

Adam Stewart and his father Gordon 'Butch' Stewart have certainly managed to blaze a trail in the travel, tourism and hotel industry here in the Caribbean. The Sandals mega brand has maintained a number one position in its class and when we consider that the Stewarts have succeeded – no matter the economic circumstances - there's a lesson or two in there for our own private sector operations. Adam is here this evening to exchange ideas about intentional pathways to success... and we are all eager to engage with him.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a time for celebration. But it is also a forum within which we can reflect on how we can transform our country into one that is prosperous and attractive to investors.

Upon reviewing the personal anecdotes and profiles of our inductees and awardees, both present and past, we observe that a similar thread seems to be emerging. They are all - bar none - entrepreneurs and leaders in every sense of the word. What propels them to go beyond what is commonly perceived as limits, accomplish greatness, and inspire others to follow in a similar fashion, varies from person to person.

At the same time, however, the commonalities are many. Hard work, dedication, clarity of purpose and an innate hunger for success benefited not only themselves, but their families, colleagues and their

country. What better examples could we have in this regard, other than our 2016 inductees to the Business Hall of Fame: Ignatius Ferreira and the late Joe Pires Snr.?

As our country stands on the cusp of change, it is to these highly creative, entrepreneurial and visionary citizens we will look, to lead the effort towards diversification and sustainability of our economy. Each year, without fail, the T&T Chamber seeks out persons of this calibre and creates a platform for the country, the region and indeed, the rest of the world to focus on their outstanding contribution. Here, Trinbago... celebrate yourselves... celebrate your potential in your people!

Having gone through a rigorous adjudication process courtesy of our selection panel, our inductees and winners will now join the distinguished ranks of business leadership.

By now, many of you would be familiar with who they are; but it gives me great pleasure to announce: -

Label House Group Limited - a company truly deserving of every accolade bestowed upon it - emerged winner of this year's Internationally Known ... T&T Owned Company of the Year Award, sponsored by First Citizens.

Sponsored by EY, our Master Entrepreneur of the Year is Satyakama Maharaj, a man who pioneered Sacha Cosmetics Limited. We anticipate that Trinidad and Tobago will be well represented at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year in Monaco next year, should Mr. Maharaj opt to attend!

Also, courtesy of EY, the Winning Women award goes to Jenny Dan Sharma this year.

As the evening's proceedings unfold, the winner of the Emerging Entrepreneur will be revealed from among the following three finalists: Anya Ayoung Chee of Anya Ayoung Chee Limited; Isabel Brash of Cocobel Chocolates; and David Thomas and Rachel Renie of Market Movers Limited.

Congratulations to all our inductees and winners! Your steadfastness and tenacity have clearly won out, making you worthy role models on the journey to success.

Esteemed audience, we acknowledge our corporate investors and more specifically, our two exclusive Category Investors - EY and First Citizens. Once more this year, your invaluable support has made it all possible. Thank you.

We at the T&T Chamber are very proud that this annual event has grown tremendously since the introduction of the Business Hall of Fame in 2005. Much to our delight, this event has emerged as one that is truly respected among members of the business community in Trinidad and Tobago. We are certain too, of its power to inspire emerging leaders and entrepreneurs to take risks and strive for excellence and quality standards.

The T&T Chamber will continue to play its part in raising the bar with respect to business in Trinidad and Tobago. On behalf of our members, we will continue to work to return this nation to a state of economic growth and productivity, while encouraging business to shoulder its responsibility as good corporate citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen, on that note, it is truly my honour to present to you Trinidad and Tobago's finest... men and women of distinction at this year's Champions of Business!

Do enjoy the rest of your evening with us. Thank you.