



REMARKS

THE HONOURABLE CAROLYN SEEPERSAD-BACHAN

MINISTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MP FOR SAN FERNANDO WEST

AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE OPEN HOUSE

BRIAN LARA PROMENADE, PORT OF SPAIN

MONDAY 18TH JUNE, 2012



Ministry of
Public Administration

SALUTATIONS

Cabinet Colleagues, Minister of Tobago Development, the Honourable Vernella Alleyne Toppin.

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration, Ms. Gillian Macintyre

Head of the Public Service, Mr. Reynold Cooper

Deputy Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Public Administration, Mr. Richard Madray, and Ms. Praba Maraj

Other permanent secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries present today.

Members of the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago.

Members of the public

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

First, let me thank you all for coming to our four-day Open House that brings the entire public service to you the people of Trinidad and Tobago. This is part of Public Service Week 2012 and it is an opportunity for you who consume the multitude of services the Government offers with those who provide these services. It is also part of our sharing the idea of the journey from Gold to Diamond that is our theme this year. It is only through the interaction between service providers and service consumers that we will know what you want and expect now and in the future.

Public Service Week 2012 started appropriately enough with Saturday's 5K event in the Savannah where over 2,300 public servants and their families took part and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It showed the solidarity we have moving forward from the platform we have now in 2012 to the Diamond standard of the future.

What this week represents is a unique opportunity for the people of our country to become better acquainted with the services, job and developmental opportunities and general information that is provided by various Ministries, Agencies, Departments and other Government bodies.

And in turn, those same institutions have a rare and significant chance to interact with their most important stakeholders, you, the public, and to inform you while learning from you about how we can all move forward together.

We are here at the Brian Lara Promenade because this is the best place for people to access the Open House. It is said that if you stand up here or at Harris Promenade in San Fernando you are likely to see most of the people you know.

While we at the Ministry of Public Administration are facilitating Public Service Week, it really belongs to all the entities that form the public service and the week belongs to all of us who benefit from the services the Government provides. We are coordinating it but the week belongs to everyone.

We view these services not as gifts from the government but a fundamental right of every citizen. We believe and it is our goal as the Diamond standard that we will have a zero time and zero effort service structure. We want every citizen to have instant access to services. We want to ensure that they don't have long journeys, long waits or have to work too hard to access services. That is our goal. That is one of the end results of our journey From Gold To Diamond.

We want you to have the highest quality service at the lowest possible cost in the shortest possible time. Regardless of colour, creed, race, gender and geography every citizen of this country deserves the best that our Government has to offer. Every citizen has a right to information and the right to be heard.

I have been referring to the journey from Gold to Diamond which is our theme for the celebration of 50 Years of Public Service.

'From Gold to Diamond' is a description of the path that the public service has taken and will take from its inception on the 31st of August 1962, to this year, our 50th anniversary of Independence and then to the year 2022. This is our Golden Anniversary and we are charting the path to 2022 our Diamond Jubilee.

We cannot celebrate our nation's 50th Anniversary of Independence without giving due recognition to those public officers who have demonstrated excellence in their work and whose vision and determination brought us to this Golden standard. It is on the platform they built that we will create the architecture for the next ten years.

A Public Service Gala celebrating 50 of those outstanding public servants will take place on the 12th of July. I would like to remind you all that the deadline for the submission of nominations for meritorious public servants has been extended to this Thursday, 21st of June.

We are trying to make sure that all levels of public servants are recognized – excellence and leadership do not reside only at the top – they permeate all levels of the service and we are hoping that by extending the deadline we get nominations for people who served at all levels.

This will not be the last gathering of this kind. As we move forward, it is my vision that this becomes an annual event, a week-long face-to-face interaction and direct engagement between Ministries and Government bodies and their most important stakeholders, you, the citizens of Trinidad & Tobago.

It is my conviction that at future celebrations of Public Service Week, every Ministry, and every agency will be available to you on every day of the week of the Open House in a spacious and accessible location.

I see a future where every Ministry will be at the Open House every day and will all be accessible. I can see the Ministry of Agriculture here with their Extension officers giving advice to farmers and even to families who want to plant a kitchen garden. I can see people getting the whole range of services at the next fair next year. This is truly the path to the Diamond standard that we envisage as the key to the future.

This is our future. This is the path from gold to diamond. This is the vision of the Government and the Ministry of Public Administration and the first significant step has been taken towards making that vision a reality.

I thank you for being here with us today and I hope to see you again on all the other days, joining with us as we begin this journey from Gold to Diamond.