

**CONTRIBUTION**  
**BY THE HONOURABLE MAXIE CUFFIE**  
**MINISTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND**  
**COMMUNICATIONS**  
**IN**  
**THE APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2017**

Madame Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this Debate, following the 2017 national budget as presented by the Honourable Colm Imbert, Minister of Finance. Let me begin with my congratulations to the Minister of Finance for an excellent budget presentation and, to the Minister of Planning and Development, for her work on the development programme, that will go a long way to bring back growth to the economy.

They have done well given the enormity of the challenges the country faces. On behalf of the constituents of La Horquetta/Talparo therefore, I thank them for ensuring that this budget provided for the maintenance of equity in the sacrifices we are all being called upon to make.

My constituents know what good governance requires and appreciate that good governance and good public administration go hand in hand.

Madam Speaker, I want to begin my contribution about the work of the Ministry of Public Administration and Communication by showing, with just one example, the implications for my constituents of La Horquetta/Talparo and indeed the rest of Trinidad and Tobago, just how important good public administration is to their well-being. I will show just one example. But we all know there are several others.

I wish to make reference to a billboard that was erected in my constituency of La Horquetta/Talparo sometime in 2013 on De Freitas Boulevard, in Phase 5, La Horquetta. This billboard has been advertising the construction of a pavilion on a recreation ground and is still standing today. You can see on this billboard that the project was started in May 2013 by the Rural Development Company under the Ministry of Local

Government, then led by my friend and constituency neighbour, the Honourable Member for Tabaquite.

Madam Speaker, in 2013, the economic situation was far more favourable than it is now. Money was not then a problem. The project was scheduled to be completed in four months by September 2013 as stated on the billboard.

By the time I assumed the Public Administration and Communications portfolio some three years later in 2016, this project was still ongoing. Madam Speaker, we are now in October 2016. I am happy to report that the project should be completed in just over three weeks, after the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government was able to marshal resources for its completion.

This project epitomises everything that is wrong with Public Administration in Trinidad and Tobago – we struggle to get simple things done. Whether it is small things, like building a pavilion on a recreation ground in La Horquetta, or finishing a large project like the Point Fortin Highway, and it is not my intention to single out the Member for Tabaquite, since it is a

problem that spans administrations. Although I must admit, that under the UNC, the problem took on added dimensions.

Madam Speaker, as Minister of Public Administration and Communications, my job is to do everything possible to change this.

We cannot turn this country and this economy around unless we tackle the real problem of Public Administration in this country.

We cannot develop this country until we tackle the problems of waste, corruption and mismanagement that are at the heart of the economic challenges we face.

We cannot turn this country around unless we remove the inefficiencies that are so much a part of doing business in and out of government in Trinidad and Tobago.

The World Economic Forum's annual Global Competitiveness Index Report assesses the competitiveness landscape of economies, providing unique insights into the drivers of their productivity and prosperity.

Madam Speaker, each year since 2012, Trinidad and Tobago's Competitiveness Index ranking has gotten progressively worse. In 2016, we were ranked 94<sup>th</sup> out of 138 economies, 10 comparative places lower than we were ranked in 2012. Each year has been marked by a significant drop.

Furthermore, our first pillar of competitiveness, *Institutions*, received our worst rating. Our institutions were ranked 107<sup>th</sup> out of 138 economies. Madam Speaker, if we look at Parliament as one of our institutions and our inability to get a simple thing like the FATCA bill passed on time, we can see why we have a problem.

So that piece of Opposition intransigence that we witnessed over the last two weeks, will have real implications for our competitiveness ranking, and eventually, our ability to attract investments.

Madame Speaker, I am entrusted with improving the delivery of Government services to citizens, the moderniation and renewal

of the Public Service and the provision of credible government communications and information. I have embraced my responsibilities wholeheartedly and thank the Honourable Prime Minister for entrusting me with a portfolio which calls for transformation, restructuring and refocusing the public service so that we can assist the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Planning and Development in achieving the economic goals so desperately required by the country.

This Government has a vision for our economy. It is a vision which, I understand, those opposite don't get. But fortunately for us, the people of Trinidad and Tobago do get it and bought into it on September 7, 2015. A fundamental aspect of this Vision, which we call Vision 2030, is for our institutions to be transformed to become more efficient, and focused on creating value and delivering excellent service.

This is indeed the foundation for the work being done by the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications. This vision seeks to ensure that a project that is supposed to take four months does not take four years to complete. We will deliver a

Public Service that is more customer-focused and results-oriented.

The collapse in energy prices with the subsequent shrinking of the Government's budget, poses a challenge for the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications and all avenues of Government. Our goal is to be much more innovative and efficient, rising to meet the economic challenges that confront us.

One of the critical objectives of the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications over the next few years therefore, Madam Speaker, will be the improvement of the staffing situation in the public service. There are jobs in many areas of the public service for competent, committed and effective people that go unfilled and there is serious need to examine how we create the right opportunities for our willing and competent citizens.

As one of our core strategies to address this manpower issue, the Ministry is collaborating with the Public Service Commissions and the Service Commissions Department in a major initiative to strengthen and modernise those institutions. In so doing, they too will be better equipped and resourced to fulfill their obligations to the various other Service Commissions, which are such an important part of democracy and our governance.

A revised organisational structure has been developed for the Service Commissions Department to assist with achieving its strategic intent and, vacancy reduction is one of nine major functional areas being addressed by the Department. Short term projects established to address these functional areas are expected to be completed by December 16, 2016, Madam Speaker, and implementation of medium term plans will then follow.

Our contribution, Madam Speaker, will include any support that is needed for legislative changes, organisational structure changes, process enhancements, training and development and the development of improved information systems among other



areas. These initiatives will no doubt continue over a number of years.

There was a time, Madam Speaker, when persons aspired to join the public service, accepting that service to the public was not servitude, but rather a contribution to a higher calling – the development of country. We must restore this trust and faith in the public service once more and dispel myths of the uncommitted worker that have prevailed for far too long.

Madam Speaker, in addition to strengthening the offices of the Service Commissions Department, the Ministry is bolstered by the capacity of its Strategic Human Resource Management Division. This Division, Madam Speaker, provides oversight of the implementation of the Ministry's HRM Modernisation Plan, and most importantly, coordinates the development of HRM policies for the entire public service. By working in collaboration with the HRM agencies of Central Government such as the Service Commissions Department, the Personnel Department and other line HR divisions.

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It is this holistic approach to Government that will help shape the policies and processes which will enhance the lives of all our citizens. When we succeed in filtering these processes and procedures across the public service, building a pavilion will truly take four months rather than four years.

There is the need however, to re-orient the public service to the current economic reality which we face.

Madam Speaker, let us starting with Information and Communication Technology.....

### **Information and Communications Technology**

The Inter-American Development Bank carried out a study on “Doing Business in Trinidad and Tobago” and why the Public Service doesn’t work efficiently. This study listed ICT requirements for simple tasks, as one of the main impediments to doing business.

It is for this reason that we will be launching the **iServe** initiative to improve the way we do business in the Public Service. This project will seek to take services online so citizens have an easier way of getting things done and in doing so, improve their experiences of dealing with public service institutions. We have already started doing so with **ttconnect** and the **Single Electronic Window** run by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. We need to go much further and faster. We need to establish systems and processes to focus on advancing implementation and receiving value for money. This means Madam Speaker, that when we plan to build a pavilion in four months, it gets done in four months or less, because we can make ourselves accountable for progress and budget, by sharing information with our citizens online.

ICT is both a fast growing economic sector in itself and an enabler for Sustainable Development in all aspects of our national economy and society. Trinidad and Tobago is at the forefront of this global technology revolution.

Our citizens, especially our young persons, are among the most avid users of social media in this Hemisphere, and it is in ICT that we see one of the greatest synergies between the portfolios of Public Administration and Communications. We must continue to foster a deeper understanding and use of ICTs by all in society.

Madam Speaker, in the 2015 Manifesto, which is now Government Policy, we indicated our intention to develop Trinidad and Tobago into a hub for innovation and technology. One of the most fundamental ways that this vision will become a reality is to ensure that ALL citizens have access to ICTs.

Madam Speaker, in the 2017 Budget Estimates for the Development Programme, you will see that \$2.5 million has been allocated for the development of an ICT solution for the Property and Real Estate Services Division of the Ministry. I am pleased to announce today, Madam Speaker, that although the Budget has not yet been passed, that program has already been completed and the ICT solution is being implemented in the Property and Real Estate Services Division of the Ministry.

And the cost to the Ministry, for the solution that was estimated at 2.5 million dollars, is zero. You heard me right, Madam Speaker. We have been able to implement an ICT solution for organizing the records of the Division, placing the application process for dealing with Government properties online, without spending a cent.

We were able to create a solution to capture all information pertaining to the property portfolio and provide functionality to assist in proper decision-making. In keeping with the Government's cost reduction strategy, we utilised as much existing in-house resources as possible, to establish the database ahead of deadline. A significant achievement, Madam Speaker, for the committee which will now seek to populate the database and train staff on using the solution.

That is what we, in this administration, mean by making the country more efficient.

And Madam Speaker, this was not done in four years, not even in four months, but took just over four weeks, after they were given the challenge of solving the problem of managing the Ministry's property portfolio through ICTs.

I must publicly commend the Executive and staff of iGovtt and the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, who worked on this project and developed the code and the web-based applications for this project. We intend to use this as a template to tackle other issues, as we move to make delivery of public services more efficient.

Madam Speaker, I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the staff of the Diamond Division of the Ministry for winning the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration Ministries (CAPAM) award for innovation with another ICT project.

The Trinidad and Tobago Diamond Standard, Diamond Buzz, was announced as the winners of the Innovation Incubation category at the CAPAM President's Dinner on Saturday August

20, 2016. The Ministry of Public Administration and Communications was presented with a Certificate of Distinction and the 2016 Award for Innovation Incubation.

The Diamond Buzz project is another example of the Ministry's development of innovative, technology based solutions within the public sector. This project harnesses the talents of a group of young, burgeoning software developers working alongside targeted public service agencies to conceptualize and create ICTs that will improve access to information and provide better services to citizens.

The project seeks to prove that common citizen complaints can be addressed using innovative, and sometimes simple, technology innovations, open source software and in-house resources, as opposed to expensive proprietary software that is often accompanied by expensive consultancies, licensing and maintenance contracts.

Madam Speaker, we intend to use ICTs to solve many of the problems that now afflict the public service.

That is why our vision propels us to ensure that there is Broadband Internet Connectivity for every citizen who so desires. In the **FIRST INSTANCE**, we worked with the private sector to drastically increase the ICT footprint through free public WiFi hot-spots in 13 PTSC buses in highly traversed routes. 12 in Trinidad and 1 in Tobago. Madam Speaker, from all accounts that programme is working splendidly and we are being asked to provide more WiFi access across the country.

In the **SECOND PHASE**, the network will expand to enhance citizens' experiences in accessing Internet-based services in a wide array of public spaces and most importantly, WiFi will be available in the 2017 financial year in:

- NALIS libraries and mobile libraries,
- the Brian Lara Promenade, Arima Dial and Harris Promenade, and in Tobago
- public hospitals and health centres, and
- PTSC Transport hubs and Sea Ports



providing crucial connectivity often at dire times. The expected cost of this phase is no more than 900 thousand dollars of our available funds for fiscal year 2017.

By the **THIRD PHASE** Madam Speaker, we would have touched almost every community- improving the lives of citizens in identified public spaces in urban areas, as well as other key spaces such as passport and licensing offices.

What this Government would have then done, Madam Speaker, is the creation and deployment of a free island-wide Public Broadband Wireless Network - affording citizens the ability to seamlessly access WiFi Internet services safely and securely at hundreds of locations throughout Trinidad AND Tobago. It serves to provide additional opportunities for improved productivity and online engagement of citizens as they go about their daily lives.

This initiative will function in conjunction with other existing channels provided by both the Government and other Internet Service Providers (ISP's) to enhance the means by which our

citizens access the internet and available government services online.

Many of these services are being provided through the Enterprise Agreements, like the one managed by the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications with the Microsoft Corporation. These three-year agreements govern the use of the Microsoft software in Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, under the last administration, the three year software agreement with Microsoft cost this country 52,462,752.62 United States dollars. Madam Speaker, that represents, 331,564,596.56 Trinidad and Tobago dollars. That 331.6 million dollars represented much software we could not use and were being charged for and some we were using although we had not paid for it and were therefore penalized.

In other words, Madam Speaker, much of the 331.6 million dollars represented waste, and mismanagement on the part of our local public service officials.

Over the last four weeks, a team from the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications has been in negotiation with Microsoft and I am pleased to announced that we have reached consensus on a new agreement, subject to Cabinet approval, that will cost 4.24 million US dollars a year amounting to just over 12 million US dollars in three years.

This means, Madam Speaker,that we will save in payments to Microsoft 40 million US dollars in a three year period. That means Madam Speaker Trinidad and Tobago saves \$40 million US dollars over the course of the three year agreement. Madam Speaker, you heard me right, the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications has been able to negotiate a 40 million dollar US dollar reduction in licence payments to Microsoft. That means, Madam Speaker, 272 million TT dollars in a three year period.

Apart from the obvious savings in foreign exchange, 272 million dollars can fund the entire development programme for the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government. It can repair recreation grounds, restore roads and bridges, repair

landslips, provide bailey bridges all desperately needed in La Hoirquetta/Talparo and beyond.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate the negotiation team, comprised entirely of officers of the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications and iGovtt for their work in eliminating waste, corruption and mismanagement, that has saved this country 272 million TT dollars. And that negotiation did not take four years, or four months, it was done in four weeks.

Madam Speaker, this Administration will continue to use ICTs to create an enabling environment to facilitate the effective delivery of Public Services within budget.

### **The E-Legislative Agenda**

The use of ICTs must however, be accompanied by the appropriate legislative framework. Madam Speaker, with regard to the Government's Legislative Agenda for Fiscal 2017, ICT is expected to take centre stage.

Accordingly Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications will, in the current fiscal year, be responsible for the development and tabling of five pieces of legislation. Most importantly:

1. **The Electronic Transactions Act Amendments** which are designed to fully enable electronic commerce (“e-Commerce”) and electronic government (“e-Government”), thus facilitating the electronic delivery of business-to-business or ‘B2B’ transactions; Government-to-Business or ‘G2B’ services; and Government-to-Consumer or ‘G2C’ services. In so doing, not only would the smooth and efficient operation of business and delivery of services be significantly improved locally, regionally and internationally, but Trinidad and Tobago’s standing in the realm of competitiveness and innovation would be greatly enhanced. It means Madam Speaker, you will eventually be able to pay government bills via credit card or other electronic means.

Madam Speaker, the Trinidad Guardian on May 27, 2016 reported on a study conducted by Mastercard on the use of

electronic transactions in Trinidad and Tobago. According to the study T&T's economy can grow by 3.5 per cent if the country increased electronic payments by 30 per cent in a four-year period.

The Electronic Transactions Act Amendments, will address this. It will provide not just for government payments but also government earnings. Furthermore, full implementation will also mean that local entrepreneurs can also establish systems to receive international payments electronically. This can lead to a whole new e-business industry creating a new foreign exchange source.

With this mind, the Ministry has since re-constituted the e-business roundtable of private and public sector executives to expedite implementation.

The other four pieces of legislation relevant to the Ministry, to be addressed in this financial year are:

- The Data Protection Act Amendments
- The Freedom of Information Act Amendments
- The Telecommunications Act Amendments; and
- The Cinematograph Act Amendments.

Madam Speaker, the above pieces of legislation are all characterized by a common thread; they reflect the Government's focus in designing legislative infrastructure so as to create an enabling environment.

## **TATT**

Madam Speaker, this brings us to the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT). It is with great pleasure that I announce that Trinidad and Tobago has been elected to the Chairmanship of the Council and of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) for the period 2016 to 2018; and that Mr. Gilbert Peterson, Chairman, of the Board of Directors of the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago,

will serve as Chairman of the aforementioned bodies on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Speaker, this is a tremendous honour given the influence of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Union and the potential it gives this country to have a strong voice in the international telecommunications arena. I wish to congratulate Mr Peterson who I am sure will be a worthy representative in this arena.

One of the major accomplishments of TATT as it relates to Intellectual Property Rights during 2016, was the removal of Trinidad and Tobago from the Watch List of the Office of the President's United States Trade Representative.

We are now compliant and will ensure continued compliance by continuing to engage with foreign content providers, broadcasters, the Intellectual Property Office of Trinidad and Tobago, CARICOM and the United States Trade Representative. We will be contributing to the upcoming joint CARICOM-US Public-Private Sector Stakeholder Dialogue on Broadcast Licensing in the Caribbean.



Madam Speaker, I am also pleased to inform this Honourable House that the Telecommunications Authority has mandated the implementation of Mobile and Fixed Number Portability to enable subscribers to change their operators without having to change their telephone numbers. Madam Speaker, TATT and the fixed and mobile operators in the market have agreed to implement mobile number portability from 31 October, the end of this month and fixed number portability from 30 November this year. Before the end of the year you will be able to change your phone providers whether TSTT, Digicel or Flow without having to change your number.

### **Preparing for the new Procurement Regime**

Madam Speaker, as part of this Government's vision for the future of our country, there is a focus on implementation, achieving the intended results and getting value for public money spent. New institutional structures, systems and processes will be established to focus on advancing implementation and receiving value for money. One such institution that has been established is the Office of Procurement

Regulation as we prepare for the new Procurement Regime that is imminent.

Madam Speaker, it is with great honour, that I can state that the Public Management Consulting Division within the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, has worked, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and the UNDP Consultant, to determine the structure, staffing and effective functional capacity for the establishment of the Office of Procurement Regulation.

To this end, work has been done to analyse the functions of the office, frame the organizational arrangements, identify the job profiles and write the job descriptions for the office.

### **Rationalising government accommodation**

Madam Speaker, I now turn to government accommodation, for it is imperative that we find for public officers, safe & comfortable working environments that are conducive to

productivity and that adhere to all the required health and safety guidelines.

As you are aware Madam Speaker, this Government recognized two things when we first sought to construct the Government Campus Plaza:

1. That the portfolio of Government properties had neither increased in quality nor quantity for decades;
- and 2. Increasing numbers of public officers were working in unsuitable workspaces that frequently invited the scrutiny of the OSH Department and the Representative Unions. This often resulted in both partial and complete shutdowns of operations, causing significant disruption in the quality of service offered to the public, and a consequent loss of revenue.

I cannot understate the accommodation crisis that Ministries currently face. Outstanding demand in Port of Spain is for approximately 500,000sq ft. of property. Most public officers know this, and the general public can sense their growing discontent, as they too become collateral damage in the process.

Madam Speaker, I can report that three of five ministries and agencies earmarked for the Government Campus Plaza have been moved into their accommodations and are now operating from the Plaza. The Customs and Excise Building, the Immigration Division Building and the Education Towers are now 100% completed and occupied.

With respect to the remaining two ministries and agencies:

- The Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs Tower has been completed but not yet occupied, due to a request by the ministry for the installation of the Firewall Fiber optic backbone.
- The Board of Inland Revenue Tower is expected to be completed by 31 December 2016.

The completion and occupation of the Government Campus Plaza will optimise public service delivery by providing Public Officers and the wider public with modern, clean and OSH-compliant office accommodation.

In moving out of rental accommodations we have been able to save taxpayers money, Madam Speaker. As an example, the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications handed back the keys to a building being rented at over one million dollars a month for three years for the Personnel Department although it was never occupied. One million dollars a month, Madam Speaker, for an empty building.

We also took up occupation of One Alexandra Place, which had not been occupied for six years and was incurring rent of 600,000 dollars a month, a figure negotiated by members opposite, although they never occupied the building. Madam Speaker, we have saved the taxpayers money and are now in occupation of the building under the terms that had been negotiated previously.

In fact, the government has been paying rent for several unoccupied premises over the years. Madam Speaker, we have given up more than 20 leases and in fiscal year 2016 we have been able to reduce rents paid for unoccupied buildings from 3.3

million dollars to 1.7 million dollars a month. And we are moving, as swiftly as is allowed, to eliminate all rental expenditure on unoccupied properties.

### **The Government Information Services Limited (GISL)**

I would like to now address my Communications Portfolio, and account for the time spent leading the transformation of several state entities.

Over the last year we have attempted to stem the haemorrhaging of resources at both the Caribbean New Media Network and the Government Information Services Ltd, both of which became bloated as a result of wanton waste, corruption and mismanagement and were unable to meet the basic trading obligations including paying creditors.

I am happy to report today that, not only has GISL begun to pay its media creditors, but it is now also in a position to, over time, pay the gratuity owed to former staff members and other obligations.

## **CNMG- the way forward**

Madam Speaker, I must now focus on State-owned entity CNMG. The Ministry, as you are aware, conducted a public consultation on the role of state media from November 5 to 18, 2015.

The final report titled “Toward Dynamic Public Service Media: Proposal on the way forward for CNMG and GISL” informed the direction, policy and legal structure of state owned media in Trinidad and Tobago. Madam Speaker, these organisations have eliminated waste, corruption and mismanagement of funds and are already operating more efficiently. Even after budget allocations have been cut, GISL has been able to pay bills and outstanding debts with sufficient funds still available for other programming projects. This was not possible in fiscal year 2015.

We, however, still recognize that the current model is not sustainable and will be making further announcements about the way forward in due course.

The Government Information Service Division, the Government Printery and the Government Human Resource Services Company are all being remodeled to take into consideration the change-economic realities and become more cost effective in the delivery of the services they provide. Time does not permit me to go into the full details.

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### **National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago (NATT)**

Madam Speaker, the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago (NATT) is my next area of attention. The National Archives facility is undergoing tremendous change that will see improved functionality and significance to Trinidad and Tobago.

NATT has embarked on a drive to automate and digitize all archival records. As Trinidad and Tobago takes more progressive actions towards compliance in all facets of the digital economy, it would be remiss of this Ministry and our good Government to leave our artefacts in the dark ages.



## **National Library and Information Services (NALIS)**

### **Restoration of Heritage Library - Eric Williams Memorial Library**

Madam Speaker, in fact, this Ministry, through NALIS has continued construction and restoration work on existing and new library facilities across T&T. Last year I had the pleasure of opening new libraries in Rio Claro and Couva while reviving the mobile library service in Central Trinidad.

The Chaguanas and Mayaro libraries are still under construction as part of the Library Modernisation project, which seeks to help transform communities.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Communications is also currently overseeing Phase I of restoration work on the Heritage Library, which began in 2013 and subsequently stalled,

like the pavilion in La Horquetta, leaving much work left to be done.

This Government recognizes the tremendous asset that this building is, and it was also the place that this country's first prime minister came to national prominence in a series of debates.

This new structure will now house the Eric Williams Collection of written and oral recordings, artefacts, and electronic productions currently housed at the University of the West Indies. This collection, although still being under the control of the St Augustine Campus of the UWI will, I am sure, be welcomed by all the citizenry of T&T as an addition to the University of Woodford Square.

## **Financial Summary**

Madam Speaker, I present to the good House the projects and initiatives under my portfolio as Minister of Public Administration and Communications. These combined portfolios were executed and implemented with a budget of \$1.134B. Our available funds for fiscal year 2017 have been reduced to \$1.023B.

Please note further Madam Speaker, that as of September 30, 2016, this Ministry has accounted for an expenditure of around \$72 M or 81% percent of our Public Sector Investment Programme budget. This reflects commendably on our capacity to deliver and we intend to surpass this in the future.

## **Conclusion**

Madam Speaker, there are challenging times ahead, challenges any institution faces when in transformation and modernisation mode. But in my seven months as Minister of Public Administration and Communications, we have shown our resilience time and time again. Fiscal year 2016 is testament to just some of the great things we collectively as a government can accomplish when we re-organise, re-strategise and re-focus.

In fact, I would like to acknowledge the project we undertook to provide a Car Park facility on Abercromby Street for this Ministry and which we opened on Monday. This project was completed and delivered under time and under budget. The era of the four-year pavilion is over. Madam Speaker, this is how things are going to be while the PNM administration occupies the government and we maintain our commitment to eliminating waste, corruption and mismanagement.

This is a new era.

I wish to acknowledge the many Public Servants who work hand in hand to deliver exceptional work as called upon. Public Servants are the backbone on which this nation was formed, and I will be working assiduously to ensure we continue to overcome the hurdles we face and emerge stronger.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.



