OPENING REMARKS BY

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AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FINDINGS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S SOFTWARE & WEB DEVELOPMENT SECTORAL INNOVATION MAPPING (SIM) STUDY

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

Good Morning and Welcome!

It is indeed a pleasure to be with you at such an auspicious event – the *Launch of the Findings of Software and Web Development Sectoral Innovation Mapping (SIM) Study*. This launch is the third in a series of five (5) launches and is the last launch for this 2016 calendar year. Over the past five (5) months, NIHERST has successfully launched the findings of two (2) SIMs. Both events were well-received. The successes of these events were largely owed to the active engagement of invited guests during the Q&A segments as well as, the outpouring of credits and requests for more information on the SIMs' findings.

The <u>first</u> SIM mapped the innovation system of the local Animation Industry, an industry that straddles both the Creative and ICT sectors. The <u>second</u> SIM focused on innovation in the local Energy Services Sector. This morning we are unveiling the findings of the <u>third</u> SIM which maps the innovation system of the local Software and Web Development Industries.

The conduct of Sectoral Innovation Mapping also known as SIM is not new to the world. It is new to the research landscape in Trinidad and Tobago. I am very pleased NIHERST is the forerunner in the conduct of this type of ground breaking research. The recent contraction of our national economy by 5.2% ushers in the need for evidence based research to guide policy makers in identifying and deploying relevant and

impactful interventions that increase economic growth and development.

The SIM is one of the many research tools that can generate high quality information. From my learnings, the SIM offers a snapshot of an industry in its current state. It unveils the actors, their roles, the intensity and nature of their interactions, the drivers and impediments to innovation in the sector, the gaps in capacity, the business models in use, the challenges encountered and equally important, highlights the "intangibles", framework conditions that positively or negatively impact the performance of stakeholders in the system. To date, as an added bonus, the SIMs have also raised awareness of innovations with commercial potential.

Rest assured the conduct of this SIM exercise on the Software and Web Development industries is not one in futility. Transitioning to a knowledge-based economy means leaning more heavily on knowledge-intensive industries. In this scenario, knowledge and technology are married in a complex link. A knowledge-based view focuses on the interactive processes through which **knowledge is created and exchanged** within and outside firms and other organisations. To transition Trinidad and Tobago to the desired end state, namely a knowledge-based economy, there must be **easy and reliable access to information by all** – public as well as, private sector persons and entities. Indeed, interaction with various bodies of information and knowledge requires, ideally, an all-digital experience, which every organization has not fully developed. In my opinion, it seems apparent that the solution to effectively

advance the flow of information in a timely, end-user friendly and sustainable way is through the development, adaptation and active use of ICTs.

Software and web applications are integral components of ICTs. Certainly, any attempt to grow ICTs as an enabler, or as a sector or a combination of both, must be accompanied by growth in Software and Web Development industries.

Across disciplines, Software and Web applications are indeed "disruptive technologies". They have changed the way we communicate, both personally and professionally, how we play, how we organise our work and how we trade commercial goods and services. In hindsight, these **disruptive yet innovative technologies** have ushered in new norms or what

might be referred to as "the new normal", revolutionising the way firms work and how they conduct business. Not so obvious, but equally important, ICTs are breaking down the walls of insularity. In general, and Trinidad and Tobago is no exception in this regard, we are citizens of the global village, with global information needs, and with a growing affinity for information sourced beyond national borders.

Over the last decade, successive governments have recognised that Trinidad and Tobago cannot risk isolating itself from being part of the digital revolution, the global digital economy and the digital workplace. ICTs and the many systems created are critical to our national development. Our digital dexterity is a primary contributor to adding value to our national economy, and our ability to exploit emerging technologies. Failure to

support in a relevant and sustainable way, adjustments, improvements and innovations in this industry would only be to our detriment in widening the digital divide.

Our government has demonstrated support for ICTs in various ways. Salient initiatives include the creation and deployment of the **Fast Forward** programme; the establishment of **iGovTT;** the National Information and Communication Technology Co. Ltd; **Govnet** – the government's communication backbone; the government's electronic portal, namely, **ttconnect**; the creation of a **Single Electronic Window** - the SEW - is an electronic platform for trade and business transactions; the proclamation of certain provisions in the **Data Protection Act of 2011**; and more recently, the design of a new initiative which will be released to the public.

Given the current state of the economy, NIHERST does not have the luxury of being a passive observer - simply waiting for things to happen. Under my (Acting) Presidency, and in the absence of a Board of Governors, my highly competent, dedicated and committed staff for whom I have deep respect, will continue to do their part in forging ahead with the mandate of NIHERST - **to raise awareness and increase the use of scientific knowledge and technologies.** Under the organisation's policy and research agenda, we have started with the SIMs. We welcome other actors to build upon this body of quality research.

Of course, there is much more that I would like to say in support of the SIM initiative, which I will defer, in the interest of time.

In closing, I wish to sincerely thank the Policy, Research and Intelligence Department for its stellar efforts in delivering quality research on all three (3) SIM exercises. I must especially thank Miss Julie David, our Senior Policy Analyst and Head of this Department for her astute leadership and guidance on all SIM exercises. And most sincerely, as well, her staff for their hard work, staying power and demonstrative commitment to quality research and effective delivery. Also, on behalf of the NIHERST Executive, Management and Staff, I express my sincerest gratitude to **YOU**, the industry stakeholders, educational and training institutes, public and private support institutions, who willingly supported NIHERST and shared your thoughts, subject expertise and experience with us.

I am truly happy to open this launch, as we await the findings of this research project – The Sectoral Innovation Mapping of the Software and Web Development Industries. It is my belief that this type of research is critical and that the conduct of this SIM and others are indeed timely and relevant to the sectors identified.

Thank You.