

OPENING REMARKS

**Ms. Sylvia Lalla
PRESIDENT (AG.)**

**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE SECTORAL INNOVATION MAPPING
STUDY OF THE ANIMATION INDUSTRY**

**(9.20 a.m. – 9.30 a.m.)
JULY 29, 2016**

**HILTON TRINIDAD AND CONFERENCE CENTRE
(BELMONT SALON)**

**Minister of State in the Ministry of Education
Dr. the Honourable Lovell Francis**

**Minister of Trade and Industry
Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon**

**Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education
Mrs. Angela Sinaswee-Gervais**

**Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry
Mr. Norris Herbert**

Representatives of the Business Community

Members of the Media

Government Officials

Specially Invited Guests

NIHERST Management and Staff

Good morning and welcome!

It is indeed my pleasure to deliver the opening remarks at this auspicious event - the **Launch of the Sectoral Innovation Mapping (SIM) of the ICT sector** in which the Animation Industry features as a strategic sector under ICT.

NIHERST now in its 32nd year of existence, and at this juncture, under my Acting Presidency, is treading new waters and in the throes of charting a new strategic direction for itself. In the absence of a Board of Governors, it is incumbent on my Management Team under my leadership to forge ahead with the business of NIHERST. Currently, a top priority is to undertake a review of our programmes and projects ensuring that all are aligned to the national agenda and moreover, to our mandate as outlined in the original NIHERST Act of 1980. My highly competent, dedicated and committed staff for whom I have deep respect have been working together and with me to strategically situate our institution within the dynamic and ever changing kaleidoscope of our contextual environment. Further, we continue to apply our skills and knowledge to promote and increase awareness in science and technology to the people of our nation and in providing surplus benefits to our government.

Research exercises of this nature are necessary for NIHERST. It showcases the capacity of the organisation to conduct detailed and complex research. It also provides an opportunity for the institution to feature projects under its policy and research agenda.

In the formative years, NIHERST was responsible for the higher education agenda in Trinidad and Tobago and was known for its programmes offered by the **Information Technology College**, the **School of Nursing**, the **College of Health Sciences** with its medical technology and radiography programmes, and the **School of Languages**. Subsequently, the programmes came under the auspices of COSTAATT. Also, the work of the former **NIHERST Committee on the**

Recognition of Degrees (CORD) laid the foundation for the establishment of the **Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)**. Our responsibility for those portfolios has been transferred to other bodies.

More recently, NIHERST is highly reputed for science popularisation. This focus comprises the National Science Centre's Visitors Programme, the Caribbean Youth Science Forum first launched in 1999 and originally funded by the OAS, the NASA internship programme, the outreach programme COMDESI conducted in underserved communities, and our science camps to name a few.

Projects that fall under our Policy, Research and Intelligence Programme supported by the Science and Technology Statistics and the Policy, Research and Intelligence Departments while less known, are expansive. Critical documents produced by these departments influence and inform decisions, strategies and policies that impact the growth and development of science and technology both nationally and regionally.

The S&T Statistics Department has a unique space in the sphere of data collection. It is to date the only entity which collects, compiles, analyses and publishes statistics related to science, technology and innovation (STI) in Trinidad and Tobago, on an ongoing basis. Several STI surveys have been conducted and the data collected has been used to inform policy by the Ministry of Education (ME) and also used in-house by our PRI Department. NIHERST is the regional leader in the English-speaking Caribbean for science and technology data. It should be noted that this data has also informed reports conducted by UNESCO, RICYT - Iberoamerican Network of Science and Technology - and the Organisation of American States (OAS) to name a few.

The work of the PRI Department has informed Ministerial and Prime Ministerial Briefs on matters related to STI. Other works completed include analytical and research documents e.g. **T & T Country Report on STI (2013)**; and a brief entitled **STI: A High Priority for Trinidad and Tobago (2016)**. The **National Science and Technology Policy** is currently on the national research agenda. And NIHERST is tasked with the responsibility to formulate this policy document.

I am truly happy to launch this research project - **The Sectoral Innovation Mapping of the Animation Industry**. I strongly believe that this type of research is critical and the conduct of this SIM and other SIM studies in train are timely and relevant. For Animation, I have learned that there are two studies prepared by local parties, the more recent undertaken circa 2012-2015. And while the information in those studies would have been relevant at that time, some of it is now dated.

Innovative industries such as Animation evolve and transform at a rapid pace as new technologies are imported, modified and diffused into the local market. In my opinion, the conduct therefore, of the SIM, on this dynamic industry, is aptly justified. The SIM offers a snapshot of the industry in its current state and at the same time, unveils the actors, the intensity of their interactions, their challenges and some of the framework conditions that impact the performance of the sector.

I now wish to sincerely thank the Policy, Research, and Intelligence Department for its hard work and staying power in undertaking an exercise of this nature. I also wish to especially thank Miss Julie David, our Senior Policy Analyst and Head of this Department, who as an experienced professional and practitioner in the field of policy research has and continues to skilfully mentor her staff through the conduct of this and future SIM exercises.

The Animation SIM kick-starts the first of many ground-breaking exercises. I anticipate the findings of the SIM will positively impact the performance of the business community's presence here this morning. We are receptive to your ideas and we are in the business of sharing data and invaluable information, thereby expanding our reach to you and our many stakeholders.

I leave you with this thought.....

When we ask ourselves of what value is science and technology, all we need to do is simply look around us. **Science is everywhere** and technology which makes our lives easier impacts us all.

Dr. Edsel Edmunds, a Nematologist, and one of NIHERST's Caribbean icons in Science and Technology says it best "All disciplines are grounded in Science".

Thank You.