



## **OPENING REMARKS BY**

**MS. SYLVIA LALLA  
PRESIDENT (AG)  
NIHERST**

**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FINDINGS OF TRINIDAD AND  
TOBAGO'S ENERGY SERVICES SECTORAL INNOVATION  
MAPPING (SIM) STUDY**

**(9:15 a.m. – 9.25 a.m.)  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2016  
PARIA SUITES HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE**

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

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

**The Honourable Nicole Olivierre  
Minister of Energy and Energy Industries**

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

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

**Dr. Ulrich Thiessen  
International Cooperation Programme Manager  
Delegation of the EU to Trinidad and Tobago**

**Ms. Rosemary Lall  
Programme Officer (Energy, Environment & Disaster Risk  
Management)  
UNDP**

**Representatives of the Energy Services Industries**

**Members of the Media**

**Government Officials**

**NIHERST Executive and Staff  
Specially Invited Guests**

## Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning and Welcome!

I am honoured to be in your presence this morning at such an auspicious event – the 2016 Launch of the ***Findings of the Trinidad and Tobago's Energy Services Sectoral Innovation Mapping Study***. I know it was no easy task to conduct a SIM on this expansive and in-depth sector. I want therefore to thank the analysts who have stayed the course and ventured far, and continue to step up to the demands of the research, compilation and presentation of the findings. Equally, and on behalf of the NIHERST Executive, Management and staff, I want to express our sincere gratitude to YOU, the industry stakeholders, educational and training institutes and the public and private support institutions for opening your doors to NIHERST and sharing your subject expertise, experience and thoughts with us.

In its formative years, NIHERST was responsible for the higher education agenda in Trinidad and Tobago, offering programmes at 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, those programmes came under the auspices of COSTAATT. It should be noted that 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)**. NIHERST responsibility for those portfolios has since been transferred to other bodies.

NIHERST is now in its 32nd year of existence; and under my Acting Presidency, my Executive and Management Teams, in the absence of a

Board of Governors, are charting yet another strategic direction for the organisation. Currently, a top priority on the NIHERST agenda is the completion of a review of the Institute's programmes and projects, to ensure alignment to the national agenda and moreover, to the NIHERST mandate as outlined in the original NIHERST Act 20 of 1984.

The Institute's efforts are mainly concentrated on the conduct of research, the findings of which support evidence-based policy formulation, programmes and decision-making, growing an appreciation for scientific concepts and knowledge among the youth and adults and supporting the use and adoption of technology.

Our programme areas are science popularization; science education; creativity and innovation; policy research and Intelligence; building collaborative relationships; and Science City.

- **Science Popularisation** with its focus on "science for all" is supported by the National Science Centre Visitors' Programme, the annual Caribbean Youth Science Forum (CYSF), and ICONS in Science and Technology, among others.
- **Creativity and Innovation** - COMDESI outreach programme, conducted in under-served communities and focusing on community-centred design and innovation.
- **Policy, Research and Intelligence** incorporates the work of two departments, the Science and Technology Statistics Department and the Policy, Research and Intelligence Department whose responsibility among other assignments is the conduct of the SIMs.
- **Building Collaborative Relationships** – NASA Internships and INVOCAB projects.

Admittedly, I am pleased with the results of the work completed by my dedicated and competent staff. Their continued and unwavering efforts

in working with me to re-position NIHERST in this ever-changing kaleidoscope of our contextual environment, can only command my deep respect and appreciation.

Outside of NIHERST, my colleagues who are aware of the ongoing Sectoral Innovation Mapping exercises have asked me why the SIM? And why the targeted sectors? There are many reasons why NIHERST has initiated and supported the SIMs. Indeed, our mandate is to raise awareness and increase the use of scientific knowledge and technologies. The SIMs not only inform us of those scientific concepts and technologies being used by specific industries, but the research also taps into the factors driving and impeding the use of science and technology to build innovations of relevance for industry. Likewise, the SIM raises awareness of the innovations that exist, highlighting those that are export-ready and those that may need some minor adjustments prior to entering markets. Moreover, the findings help us to understand the skill sets and standards required to build capacity; enhance the performance of firms; and strengthen the linkages among actors in the sector.

The recent contraction of our national economy by 5.2% has underscored in my mind that research tools of this nature are urgently needed to investigate and make sense of the realities encircling us.

A high degree of knowledge and competency resides in the energy services sector. Trinbagonian energy services personnel have built a solid reputation locally, regionally and internationally - their expertise is sought after by governments and industry operators h near and far. On my way to work, I heard over the radio that the first oil well constructed was assembled in Trinidad, more specifically in the La Brea region in 1857. Today, more than 156 years after, we are still drilling for oil and by the 1970s for gas. It is a long time to be in the business and I am sure energy services personnel in our midst would agree with

me that, our existence and experience in the industry for this length of time, has resulted in the acquisition of much capability and expertise. They have seen it all and done it all.

The research tells us that international energy services providers tend to acquire the lion's share of opportunities to service international operators in our local environment. Be that as it may, our locally-grown energy services companies are resilient and have demonstrated that through "boom and bust", they have the staying power and will survive. In 2015, ExxonMobil announced a big oil find at its offshore well ***Liza-2*** in Guyana. This oil find builds on the success of *Liza1* which was declared the world's biggest oil discovery of 2015. It is estimated that these reservoirs hold more than 1.4 billion recoverable barrels of high-quality oil. This information I have just shared tells me that the prospects for our locally grown energy services companies are many.

As a citizen of this country, I am proud of the energy services personnel and I am eager to learn more about their services, what they have to trade, what support they need and what are their challenges? With this information, public support institutions can be better positioned to align business support services that are relevant and bear much fruit.

Let me again sincerely thank the Policy, Research, and Intelligence Department for its visionary thinking, hard work and staying power in undertaking an exercise of this nature. I especially thank Miss Julie David, our Senior Policy Analyst and Head of the 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 Energy Services Sectoral Innovation Mapping is the second SIM to be launched. I am proud that NIHERST is the forerunner in this type of research work. I anticipate that the findings of the SIM will positively

stir many other support institutions into action. NIHERST is receptive to your ideas. We see ourselves as a bridging institution. And yes, we are in the business of sharing data and invaluable information. We will continue to apply our skills and knowledge to promote and increase awareness in science and technology to the people of our nation, providing surplus benefits to our varied stakeholders, inclusive of industry, academia and government.

I Thank You.