



Feature Address by

THE HONOURABLE BRIGADIER GENERAL

ANCIL ANTOINE (RET'D)

MINISTER OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

On the occasion of

T&TEC'S

61ST ANNUAL EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

AND AWARDS CEREMONY

5pm Saturday, November 14, 2015

Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain

SALUTATIONS

- Mr. Keith Sirju, Chairman Designate of T&TEC
- Commissioners Designate Mr. Glenford Cyrille, Ms. Janet Richards, Mr. John Chapman and Mr. Clifford Campbell
- Mr. Kelvin Ramsook, General Manager of T&TEC
- Mr. Anthony Bartholomew, Technical Advisor to the Minister of Public Utilities
- Ms. Jamila Draper, Advisor to the Minister of Public Utilities
- Senior Executives of T&TEC
- Mr. Surindranath Ramsingh, Acting General Manager of PowerGen
- Ms. Jacqueline Look Loy, General Manager of Trinity Power
- Mr. David D'Andrade, Chairman of Trinidad Generation Unlimited
- Other Senior Officials from PowerGen, Trinity Power and Trinidad Generation Unlimited
- Senior Officials from Agencies of the Ministry of Public Utilities
- Officials from the employees representative groups-OWTU, SSA and EPA
- Executives of T&TEC
- Award recipients and their guests
- Other employees of T&TEC

- Other specially invited guests
- Members of the Media

Good evening. I am honoured to have the opportunity to address you, ***the Board of Commissioners**, Management and Staff of T&TEC at your 61st Employee Recognition and Long Service Awards Ceremony.

This event, which recognises the decades of service that many of you have given to T&TEC and to the public utilities sector, has, over the years, become one of the highlights of the Commission's calendar.

I can see that a lot of thought and hard work was put into the organisation and implementation of tonight's Ceremony, and so I would like to commend the Management and staff of T&TEC for the vision and dedication to excellence that goes into every function like this one.

As I thought about what I would say to you this evening, I was reminded of a statement made by Steve Covey, the internationally acclaimed entrepreneur and author, Mr. Covey wrote (and I quote):

“Always treat your employees exactly as you want them to treat your best customers.”

Those words, if taken seriously, can truly revolutionise the public utility services and the way they are administered. Because they remind us that our internal stakeholders, the people we work with every day, are just as important as those who walk through our doors to request a new connection or to pay their electricity bills. In fact, if the receptionist (I see that one of the receptionists was recognized tonight) or customer service representative in question is unhappy or dissatisfied with their job, it will be reflected in their interaction with the customer. And so, the onus is on the organisation to provide an enabling and empowering environment for its members of staff.

Of course, showing recognition for the contributions made over time is a crucial part of that process. And that is why we are here this evening, to thank you, the employees of T&TEC who continue to embody the Commission's dedication to the delivery of a safe, reliable and affordable electricity supply to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Tonight, awards have been handed out to persons who have achieved from fifteen (15) years to as many as over forty (40) years of service, and that recognition will also be given to those who have set a benchmark in the areas of cost effectiveness, safety, and customer service among others. I see that recipients got awards for safe driving. Overall, more than three hundred (300) awards will be presented this evening, a fitting representation of the size of the Commission's workforce throughout the country.

At the Ministry of Public Utilities, an enhanced quality of life for everyone who calls Trinidad and Tobago home is the primary driver behind the services and programmes that we offer. And we are happy and proud to have T&TEC on board as we seek to realise that vision.

But even as we celebrate this evening, I would like to remind us all that there is much work to be done. In order to meet the energy needs of our growing industrial, commercial and residential sectors, the Commission will have to expand both its capacity for transmission and delivery and the reach of its national grid.

But as important as that objective is, there are other areas that have been pointed out by our Government for attention over the next year.

One such initiative involves the provision of free or subsidized public services for retirees. And although I am aware that persons within that demographic might already receive assistance through the Utilities Assistance Programme or the Residential Electrification Programme, some adjustments are needed to ensure that those who are most in need can benefit from it.

Another high-priority initiative involves the establishment and promotion of the use of renewable energy in homes and businesses. We at the MPU are in the process of establishing the legal framework for the introduction of solar panels into the national grid. Already, under the Utilities Assistance Programme, we have installed solar panels for households that have no access to the grid. And I am personally excited about the possibilities that will present themselves to us as we build capacity and establish infrastructure in the harnessing of solar and other renewable sources of energy.

I am also aware of the impact that an electricity supply can have on community development and growth and so, I would like to focus some of our attention and resources on the illumination of recreation grounds and other community facilities – all with the aim of providing a safe place where people can come out to play, train, exercise and spend time together. I firmly believe that our country would be a better place, if each community was provided with and made use of such a facility.

But all of these initiatives and the myriads of ways in which they can impact the lives of our citizenry would not be possible without the cooperation of each and every one of you here tonight. Already, you have set a standard that is the envy of other public utility service providers but I would like to remind you that you have also set it for yourselves. There can be no going back, we have already committed ourselves to this journey towards excellence and it is up to us to ensure that we arrive at our journey's end.

And so without taking up much more of your time, I would like to once again congratulate both the awardees and the Commission for your hard work and commitment to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

To you the awardees and members of staff, your service to the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission is truly exemplary of the dedicated, loyal and hardworking staff of the Public Service. I know this is indeed a historic and a proud moment for you and your loved ones and it is a proud moment for our country as well. As Minister of Public Utilities, I look forward to your continued partnership and support as we seek to build a bright and sustainable future for our beloved nation of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you.