



**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**OPENING REMARKS**

**BY**

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE JENNIFER BAPTISTE-PRIMUS  
MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

**AT THE**

**THREE-DAY WORKSHOP  
on  
*LABOUR MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT*  
October 30 – November 1, 2019  
(in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration)**

***TRINIDAD HILTON, PORT-OF-SPAIN***

***WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 30, 2019***

## **SALUTATIONS**

**Ms. Natalie Willis - Permanent Secretary (Ag.),**  
Ministry of Labour & Small Enterprise Development;

**Ms. Kevar Williams – Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.),**  
Ministry of Labour & Small Enterprise Development;

**Ms. Jewel Ali – Head of Office,**  
International Organisation for Migration, Trinidad and Tobago;

Members of the Inter Ministerial Committee for the Development of a  
Labour Migration Policy;-

Other Government Officials;

Ladies and Gentlemen

A blessed morning to you,

On behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, I welcome each of you to this three-day workshop which will be facilitated by the International Organisation for Migration, also known as the IOM. Over the next three days you will be exposed to a wealth of information related to the all-important issue of labour migration. Being able to come together as government officials representing various agencies under the direction of IOM specialists will allow you the invaluable opportunity to examine themes related to labour migration, in greater detail.

Unlike a lecture or a one-day seminar, the gathering over a three-day period affords members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Development of a Labour Migration Policy and other representatives from key agencies the opportunity to 'drill-down' into a range of pertinent issues. Therefore, as a result of this workshop, we would all be better equipped to ensure that a robust Draft National Policy on Labour Migration is developed.

Furthermore, given that these sessions will be led by members of the IOM team, you would be fully apprised of the relevant global standards in relation to labour migration and as a result we can ensure that the National Policy for Trinidad and Tobago is compliant with such standards. Additionally, the information obtained in this workshop would also be important in supporting the implementation of this critical policy, after it has been finalised.

This is therefore a unique opportunity which I hope that you take full advantage of and participate actively in all of the sessions by raising key questions and considering ways in which the issues raised during your sessions could be appropriately addressed within the Trinidad and Tobago context.

More than providing an opportunity for a more focused consideration of key matters related to labour migration, I would like to underscore that this workshop represents another step in the development of a Draft National Policy on Labour Migration. That is to say, we are moving closer

to establishing a national policy on this critical issue, and this in itself is an important milestone and should be recognised as such. Allow me to remind you of the steps which have already been taken in the journey towards developing a Draft National Policy on Labour Migration. Firstly the Inter-Ministerial Committee was established in July 2018 and comprises representatives from several government agencies which all have a role to play in managing labour migration.

Since July 2018, this Committee has been working assiduously on developing a *Draft Policy Framework*, including a *Situational Analysis*. Another important step in this process was the Stakeholder Consultation which was held on September 13, 2019. I understand that many of you here today also participated in that activity, where we were able to obtain the views of some one hundred stakeholders, representing government, labour, business, civil society and academia.

While the workshop which commences today is an important phase in the process of developing the Draft National Labour Migration Policy, by

no means does it represent the final step. Following this workshop, on November 12, the National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC) would consider the Draft National Labour Migration Policy framework. Additionally, a further two (2) day session with the IOM and members of the Committee will be convened to consider the Draft Policy. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) will also be invited to comment on the Draft Policy.

Having revised the Draft Policy to take into account the feedback required from these bodies, the Policy would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration. Subsequent to Cabinet's deliberations, public consultations on the Draft Policy will then be held, subsequent to which Cabinet would be asked to consider the Policy towards finalization and implementation. These steps outlined are in keeping with the Ministry's drive to ensure that all stakeholders are provided with the opportunity to share their varied perspectives, to ensure that the policy developed can be implemented by our tripartite partners.

On behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the IOM for the technical assistance that they are providing in relation to this initiative. The workshop which commences today is one form of technical assistance being provided by the IOM. Your contributions are invaluable and I am certain that this support would positively impact the quality of the Policy which is currently being developed, as well as the overall management of labour migration in Trinidad and Tobago.

Having underscored the importance of this workshop, I would like to remind you of the two primary objectives of developing a Draft National Policy on Labour Migration and invite you to ponder these during your sessions over the next three days. Firstly, the Policy will seek to ensure the protection of migrant workers and secondly, provide for the contributions of migrant workers to be channeled towards promoting national development. These objectives relate to both foreign migrants working in Trinidad and Tobago and our nationals employed overseas.

My hope is that the next three-days would be enriching, dynamic and productive. Today, you are not only collaborating towards the achievement of shared objectives as stakeholders with varied yet interconnected operations, but you are also charting the way forward for how Trinidad and Tobago will manage its current socioeconomic environment with clarity and efficiency.

Your participation in this workshop demonstrates your commitment to this goal. It signals that you have a key role to play in our nation being poised to surmount the challenges that its dynamic growth and development may bring. Finally, I must express my sincere appreciation for your continued dedication to the progress of our beloved twin island Republic. We are truly grateful for your presence and your forthcoming contributions.

Do have a productive, engaging and successful training workshop. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.