



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



CLOSING REMARKS BY:

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

(11:10 A.M. – 11:15 A.M.)

NOVEMBER 16, 2016

HILTON TRINIDAD AND CONFERENCE CENTRE (BELMONT SALON)

Good Morning!

Oftentimes when I am called to deliver the closing remarks for the SIM I am given 10 minutes to do so. Today, however, I see that my time has been cut in half - just 5 minutes. This may be good news for you...or not so good news for me!!! Either (I talk to you very quickly ... or say very little and hope it means a lot)!!!

On a more serious note, though, after listening to Robert deliver such an information- rich presentation on the industry, I think he deserves another round of applause. Thank you Robert.

In the Ag. President's opening remarks she shared that the first (2) SIMS were extremely well-received. We should now increase the number to (3). The success of this event hinges on your participation, evident by your remarks, questions and kind gestures.

In my opinion, whether you work in the public or private sectors or academia, there are learnings in this research for everyone. In general, for this particular industry, the main type of innovation is product innovation. **Firms** have designed and modified systems and apps that improve the work flow and service-delivery of a wide array of industries. The efforts of these industry stakeholders in integrating ICTs to improve our daily living must be supported.

More specifically I think the learnings for actors in the system are as follows:

For the firms, your role is critical. Whether you are involved in systems or app creations, you are building the backbone upon which the knowledge-based economy must stand. Your innovations are more often than not created out of your clients' needs. This means that the opportunities to interface with people are great. Efforts must therefore be placed not only on developing technical skills, but also on the softer skills - skills in communication to understand the business needs of your

clients; networking - as you move in new circles and cultures; and marketing - understanding the peculiarities and limitations in penetrating local and foreign markets. There are examples around us of successful ICT firms led by industry visionaries, who have mastered the use of both hard and soft skills. Quite understandably, your industry is one of the most innovative services sector. You have a dual role to play - you are an enabler and also an economic base for revenue and employment generation.

For academia, you play a critical role in building capabilities for the industry. Imparting the theoretical foundation of ICT as a discipline to students is important. However, equally important, are your efforts to get our young graduates ready for the world of work. Building that work ethic, and other softer skills can only be achieved through your deliberate efforts to dialogue and partner with industry. Your students need more internships, apprenticeship programs, mentoring

programmes and other collaborative events that prepare them for entrance into the modern workforce.

For **public sector officials** who are with us this morning, your institutions are the largest consumers of ICTs. Your role is not only to support in offering a suite of business support services, but also to help create the space for growth in the industry. You need to stimulate demand for high value ICT services. Your endorsement goes a long way in helping our local ICT firms penetrate both the local and foreign markets.

In echoing the NIHERST mantra, “we are here to help you”. NIHERST acts as a bridging institution - sharing, engaging, coordinating and bringing together actors, for creative, productive and meaningful endeavors which will sustain the sector.

Thank you.