



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

COSTAATT GRADUATION 2022
(VIRTUAL ADDRESS)

Message By

Dr. the Honourable Nyan Gadsby-Dolly

Saturday 19th Febuary, 2022

SALUTATIONS:

- Dr Rita Pemberton – Chairman of the COSTAATT Board of Trustees
- Members of the COSTAATT Board of Trustees
- Dr Gillian Paul- President of COSTAATT
- Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors and Academic Chairs of COSTAATT
- Dr Marisa Nimrod – Keynote Speaker
- Members of Faculty and Staff of COSTAATT
- Our honoured guests – the members of the 2021 graduating class
- Family, friends, and well-wishers looking on today
- Ladies and gentlemen

Congratulations to the class of 2022!

I am especially pleased to address you at your graduation ceremony today. I can only imagine the anxiety faced by all of you, having begun a programme in not so ideal conditions. To get to today, means that you would have had to think differently and work differently. You had challenge yourself even more to succeed. Which brings me to a quote from one of my favourite American actors, Morgan Freeman. Allow me to use an adaption his words as inspiration as I share this time with you *“Challenging Yourself; it’s the only path which leads to growth.”*

Completing your programmes of study was an exceptional accomplishment and I am sure your lecturers, parents and circle of support are extremely proud of you. But how do you feel, what has this experience taught you, how has it impacted on you as an individual? How has it changed you, motivated you, inspired you? These are the questions I want you to think about.

The theme of today’s graduation is, **‘Ready for a Changing World,’** What a theme...are you ready...do you think you have what it will take to change the world. As I speak to you, another one of Morgan Freeman’s quotes come to mind, one that speaks to and supports the theme and our current circumstance, that is, *“Don’t be afraid of what you want,. This is Your tine. The barriers are down.”* It is hard to think

of any aspect of our future that has not been altered in some form or fashion by the last two years. What the challenges of this time in our history has taught us is that there are no limits or barriers on what is possible. Everything in our life has changed through necessity and innovation.

Many of you, if not all will know what a SWOT analysis is, Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats. Very often the list of weakness and threats, way out strips that of strengths and opportunities but I want you to flit that script as look at yourself, your journey and the world ahead...the barriers are down...are you ready to take on the world...are you ready to make a difference? Our circumstances created an opportunity for us to become even more reliant, resilient, and receptive to change and I am sure that the education you have received at COSTATT has prepared you for the changing world of tomorrow.

There is a Chinese proverb that says, "*If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.*" Your education is your passport to your future and the future of this nation. We look to you to effect positive change and secure our nation's future. The world needs fresh ideas, creative thinkers and new perspectives and that's why, now more than ever, we have to seek input from those who will

be the leaders of tomorrow. We must look past COVID-19, going backward is not an option, reverting to doing things the way that they were done before is not an option; many not all , but many of those ways are obsolete. The world is looking to the innovators, the think tanks, the next generation of leaders, change agents...and you are it.

With the recently concluded Phase II National Consultation on Education Policy 2022-2027, the Ministry of Education is preparing the foundation for the next wave of leaders and change agents. The consultations provided an opportunity for us to learn from each other and propose new approaches to improving the education system in Trinidad and Tobago. The knowledge gained during these discussions was invaluable as we move forward.

As Minister of Education, my role along with the executive of the Ministry, is the development of policy for the leaders of tomorrow and it is to ensure that educational opportunities are available to all citizens. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago takes this mandate very seriously and we are committed to continuing the investment into the minds that will lead this country in the near future.

I must thank COSTAATT's board of trustees, president, vice presidents, deans, directors, department chairs, faculty, staff and stakeholders for your dedication and yeoman service. Your

commitment to excellence, regardless of the circumstances is what makes it possible for these graduates to be conferred with their degrees and certificates today. At the Ministry of Education, we greatly value our educators and the contributions that these phenomenal professionals make to the overall delivery of quality education. As a former member of staff, my pride obvious and I admit with some bias but all the same well placed. Thank you for your honourable service.

Conclusion

As I close, let me say again that I am in awe of what today's graduates were able to accomplish. I commend the leadership and staff of COSTAATT for dedication to producing world class graduates.

To the graduates. you have check in, passport in hand, it's time to board and take your flight to changing the world.

Congratulations and may God continue to bless you.