



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**TRINIDAD & TOBAGO INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM (TTIGF)**

*(REMARKS)*

**Message By**

**Dr the Honourable Nyan Gadsby-Dolly**

**Minister of Education**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2023**

**VIRTUAL**

It gives me great pleasure to join with you for the 7<sup>th</sup> Trinidad and Tobago internet Governance Forum (TTIGF). I must first commend this multistakeholder effort and thrust, themed: “The future of the Internet... What’s Next.” It is initiatives such as these that help us to learn from each other and develop shared solutions. To the Multistakeholder Advisory Committee (TTMAG) and other supporting partners, I offer my congratulations for putting convening this forum, which is both critical and timely.

As the world of information technology (IT) and communication technology (ICT) rapidly progresses and innovates, it is essential that Trinidad and Tobago create citizens who are ready to take their place and sit at the global table. Educational institutions from Early Childhood (ECCE) to Tertiary must, therefore, harness the full potential of this technology in order to keep the present and future generations engaged and up-to-date with the skills they need to fulfill their potential as global citizens. The Ministry of Education understands the importance of this; were we unsure, the pandemic

certainly brought it home; and in order to ensure that we have future-proofed the education sector, we have embarked upon a strategic approach that encompasses investments in system development, training, hardware, software, and human resources.

IT skills must be incorporated into the curriculum in order to ensure that students are receiving the full benefit of the technology available to them. This is easy to say; but the implementation of a digital education ecosystem is a revolutionary matter; with over 800 schools plants to equip with end-to-end WIFI, over 3000 teachers to train and equip, over 250,000 students for whom digital strategies must be included into the curriculum. And added to that, the digitization of all student and teachers records along with the creation and maneuvering of thousands of e-classrooms for all teachers, with these being the fundamental underpinnings of any attempt to digitally transform the education sector, one starts to understand the scale of the mountain we are climbing. El Tucuche has nothing on us! We here at the Ministry of Education in 2023 are suited up, with safety harnesses on, of course,

as we more resolutely, step by step, on our way to a digitally transformed sector.

You would have noted the milestones we have passed on our ascent; the outfitting of all Secondary Schools with WIFI, the SEA Online Results Portal, the new Educational Technology Unit at the MOE, the expansion in e-testing at the CXC level – these are all steppingstones along the path of progress.

So fundamental are teachers to this process of future proofing ICT in Education, that the granular details of their teaching and curriculum also must be updated to include a digital mode of operation. It cannot be left to the whims and fancies of interpretation. For only when the digital mode is wholeheartedly accepted can we move to e-testing at the term level, broaden e-testing at the CSEC level into paper II exams – writing components. Only when we include digital proficiency as a pre-requisite for completion of Primary School education will we be certain that we are producing citizens who can sit at the global table.

But these plans for the future must be underpinned today by the tough work that is digitizing an education system – changing paradigms and perceptions, motivating acceptance of a radical shift in the status quo – holding on for dear life to the gains made during what may have been the most difficult and disruptive era of the world’s history – the COVID-19 pandemic. And yes, there were gains.

As the quote goes, “never waste a good crisis,” and as we seek to future-proof ICT in education, by means of all that I have just mentioned, it comes down, for us, to our children – putting them first, preparing the now, to take place at the global table 15-20 years from now.

As we work together to make this reality, may God bless us all.