



**Sponsor Remarks for the National Launch of WEF Global
Competitiveness Report 2016**

Mr. Trevor Libert

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Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

Salutations

- Mrs. Joanne Deoraj, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Mr. Kurt Meyer, Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications
- Members of the Board of the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Dr. Balraj Kistow – Lecturer and Programme Director ALJGSB
- Dr. Terrence Farrell – Economist, Economic Advisory Board
- Mr. Brevard Nelson – Co-Founder – Caribbean Ideas Limited
- Ms. Marla Dukharan – Group Economist – Caribbean Banking, Royal Bank of Canada
- Mr. Charles Bobb-Semple – Head-Delivery, iGovTT
- Other Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen
- Members of the Media

It is an honour and privilege for us at iGovTT, to be an integral part of today's launch of the 2016 Global Competitiveness Report. Each year, we look forward to the release of two reports: the Global Information Technology Report produced earlier in the year, and the Global Competitiveness Report. It is our fifth year sponsoring this event with the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business. I should hope therefore that the message rings loud and clear, that iGovTT supports and will continue to encourage any efforts aimed at openly and seriously discussing the very important issues of technology, competitiveness and national development. 3

While our focus lies in technological readiness, we are very much aware that there are other significant contributing factors to competitiveness. The World Economic Forum defines competitiveness as the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of an economy, which in turn sets the level of prosperity that the country can earn.

In reviewing previous Global Competitiveness Reports, there are a multiplicity of factors that accounted for Switzerland's seven-time appearance at the number one spot on the competitiveness rankings. (And certainly in just a few minutes we will hear from Dr. Kistow on if they have retained this position yet again). There have been three very telling indicators of the Swiss economy that seem to contribute to their stellar performance year after year. These indicators are business sophistication, innovation and labour market efficiency. We must ask ourselves, what strides can we take to bolster competitiveness, similarly to the first world countries.

4

With our country's best showing in technology readiness in the Global Information Technology Report in July 2016, it is clear that in Trinidad and Tobago, we have the infrastructure as well as the skill level, but the level of usage at the business and Government level is not where it ought to be.

iGovTT plays a vital role in Government's strategy for using ICT as a key driver for socio-economic development in Trinidad and Tobago. There is a continuous drive to reduce the burdens persons face in trying to do business with Government and in simply accessing public services and information. This is the prevailing justification for our ttconnect service which currently provides access to three e-services and 55 Government services. In looking at iGovTT's role in boosting productivity and competitiveness in the economy, there are some possible measures that can increase national competitiveness. These include:

5

1. **Open Government Data:** this is the requirement for government agencies to participate and share information with the public.
2. **The implementation of a next generation government wide area communications network** - The Government Communications Backbone Project, or GovNeTT, establishes linkages among government agencies through a single Wide Area Network, which allows these agencies to communicate by e-mail, messaging, and scheduling platforms. This reduces bureaucracy and establishes better collaboration across various agencies through connectivity,

to create a one-stop shop for government information and services.

3. **Government Cloud:** The fundamental idea of a Government Cloud is to deliver a variety of products and services from an established centralized platform - such that economies of scale are realized in addition to other benefits such as lower cost of hardware and installations as well as faster deployment and greater mobility for stakeholders.
4. **Online Transactions and E-Commerce:** There is more to online transactions than simply submitting online applications with service requests. There is a need for successful service fulfilment which can be accomplished by bringing a paradigm shift to the ability to conduct secure online transactions. For this shift to occur, the full proclamation of the Electronic Transactions Act (2011) is necessary for end to end services via ttconnect and e-tax. A focus on the ICT legislative agenda by the Government and a push for e-services, will have a positive impact on citizens and businesses alike and will assist in propelling ICT usage.

5. Access to Broadband Internet: There is a need for further development of access to broadband internet at a low cost throughout the country. The Ministry of Public Administration and Communications recently launched “TT WiFi”, an initiative to provide free WiFi Internet access to public spaces, beginning with WiFi Internet service on several PTSC buses.

For ICTs to truly transform the public sector into an instrument of sustainable development, efficiency in service delivery must be also coupled with social equity and ensuring that all people can access quality services.

7

The work of the World Economic Forum is critical to the continued development of emerging economies such as ours for many reasons. However, speaking specifically on its impact on Trinidad and Tobago and, in the context of this Report, the information provides our nation with valuable data on what we are doing right, and the areas in which we need to improve.

We all certainly have our work cut out for us in transforming Trinidad and Tobago into a high income country with a diversified and competitive growth economy. iGovTT, remains committed to fulfilling our company's mandate to champion the development of our country to a knowledge-based society through ICT.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me end by congratulating and thanking the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business and its organisers for providing the forum within which matters of technology, 8 competitiveness and national development can be discussed. We certainly hope that the relationship we have with the institution continues to grow as time progresses. Thank you.