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NATIONAL REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS FROM THE
FOURTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

NATIONAL REPORT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION
OF THE FOURTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER 2005 TO DECEMBER 2006

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INTRODUCTION

1. Since the Fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago has made significant progress in advancing the initiatives as outlined in the Plan of Action. From the onset, it is important to point out that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has embraced a national development agenda – Vision 2020. Vision 2020 echoes the mandates of the Fourth Summit and the fulfillment of these mandates will in many cases accelerate Trinidad and Tobago’s own development agenda.

2. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has therefore been pursuing policies that have enabled the country to achieve unprecedented achievements. Key among these are robust growth with record levels of employment, a decent work framework, high levels of social development, all within a strong democratic environment.

GROWTH WITH EMPLOYMENT

3. The country stands in a position of considerable strength. After twelve years of consecutive growth the economy registered a robust 12 per cent expansion in real output in 2006, with unemployment falling to historic lows and poverty rates declining drastically.

4. While the growth was fuelled mainly by the energy sector with the coming on stream of new energy facilities including a new liquefied natural gas train, a new oil field and new petrochemical plants, the non-energy sector is also estimated to have increased by 4 per cent with the main drivers being the manufacturing and construction sectors.

5. Although the energy sector contributes approximately 4 per cent of the employment, government has used revenues generated from the energy sector to stimulate growth in the non-energy sector. Consequently, the growth in jobs over the period has come mainly from the Construction Sector, Community, Social and Personal Services, Transportation, Storage and Communications Sector. From October 2005 to September 2006 the economy created an additional 13,200 jobs, registering an historic low of 6.7 per cent.

6. Several specific initiatives have been implemented to achieve growth with employment. Some of these are detailed below.

Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises Sector

7. It is estimated that there are between 20,000 to 30,000 incorporated and unincorporated small businesses, which provide employment to approximately 55,000 to 65,000 individuals and contribute between 5 to 10 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.

8. As part of the continuum of employment generation, wealth creation and poverty reduction especially amongst the vulnerable groups such as youth and women, the Government has established, the Enterprise Development Division (EDD), under the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, and the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) to facilitate and encourage the development and expansion of the SME sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

The National Entrepreneurship Development Company (NEDCO)

9. Since its establishment in 2002, NEDCO has provided training in various aspects of small business management to over 5,000 persons and granted over 6,800 loans for the establishment of small and micro enterprises. Increased entrepreneurial activity in non-traditional business enterprises has led the Government to propose an increase of entry level funding from TT\$50,000.00 to TT\$100,000.00. Those individuals who have completed payments on their first loan will be eligible for a second loan to a maximum of \$250,000.00.

10. Additionally, under the umbrella of NEDCO, Entrepreneurial Training Institute Incubation Centres (ETIIC) have been established in Port of Spain, Barataria and San Fernando to provide business support services in the form of mentoring and advisory services, information technology support and training in entrepreneurial development and business enterprise and facilitate online market access at an international level.

Fair Share Programme

11. The Government has approved a Fair Share Programme, recommended by the EDD, to address the limitations posed by the size and structure of small businesses and the paucity of resources available to them. Under the Fair Share Programme a maximum of 10 per cent of all its contracts, to an upper limit of one million Trinidad and Tobago dollars (TT\$1,000,000), is reserved for qualifying SMEs. The Fair Share Programme covers (with the possible exception of national security procurement) all goods and

services inclusive of construction, capital and infrastructural projects and heavy equipment supply up to a limit of one million dollars.

12. The Programme includes a training component under which small and micro enterprise proprietors are equipped to manage their enterprises effectively, deliver high quality service and to maintain competitiveness in the marketplace.

The Agricultural Development Bank

13. As well, the Government, through the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), and in strategic partnership with other stakeholders, has provided special financial packages for farmers, for example, The Gro Safe Loan (ADB, National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) and Business Development Company Limited (BDC); and The Cocoa Revitaliser Loan (ADB and Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board).

14. Special financial services have been designed to target the youth, for example, The Youth Window Loan and other soft loan packages for developmental activities in rural communities including agri-business have been developed.

The Community-Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme

15. The Community Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) for Trinidad and Tobago was established in response to a concern from the national community regarding the degradation of the environment and its impact on the quality of life. The programme is designed to facilitate social transformation in the national community, by specifically addressing the issues of indiscriminate dumping of solid and other waste along roadways, open spaces and watercourses and the maintenance of the aforementioned areas. The programme also empowers communities to improve the condition of the local environment, and provides employment of semi-skilled and

unskilled individuals in activities, which are dedicated to the enhancement of the physical environment in their local communities.

16. Some of the projects undertaken by CEPEP include the following activities:

- Maintenance and rehabilitation of water courses
- Clearing and beautification of rivers
- Drainage improvements and channelisation
- General beautification and clearing of the sides and shoulders of public thoroughfares
- Landscaping
- Clearing of abandoned and dilapidated sites and parks and private lots
- Cleaning and beautification of beaches and coastal areas
- Composting and nutrient recycling
- Cutting overhead branches
- Waste removal to central disposal area

17. The implementation of CEPEP has also increased employment opportunities, and resulted in the development of a cadre of new entrepreneurs. The CEPEP is unique in structure as it provides the incubator approach to small business development and creates the platform for the development of the contractors in the programme.

18. The Programme currently involves the engagement of 113 contracted firms which manage their workforces in 34 approved Environment Work Areas (EWAs) in Trinidad through the employment of 5,840 unskilled and semi-skilled persons. CEPEP operates in 2 EWAs in Tobago and currently employs 600 workers.

Labour Market Information System

19. One of the key tools utilized by the Government in the management of Labour Market Information is the National Human Resource Management Information System (NHRMIS). This system was created for the purpose of maintaining labour market

equilibrium, through optimal human resource development and utilization by enabling the matching of available skills in the labour market with those skills required by employers.

20. Within the context of the management of labour market information, the Government has created the National Employment Service (NES). The NES, through the establishment of One Stop Career Resource Centres (OSCRC), operates as a modernized public employment service. The NES, through its automated data bank affords jobseekers the opportunity to place their job applications in the public domain so as to guarantee equity of selection among similarly qualified candidates. It also provides employers with access to an expanded pool of qualified employees.

CREATING DECENT WORK

21. The development agenda for Trinidad and Tobago has been placed within the context of the regional and international environment and its various commitments and obligations with respect to a standard setting environment for the promotion of decent work in the workplace.

22. To this end, the Government has completed ratification of the eight ILO core Conventions and reports regularly on the implementation of their Conventions. These core Conventions are as follows:

- No. 87 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, 1948
- No. 98 – Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, 1949
- No. 29 – Forced Labour, 1930
- No. 105 – Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957
- No. 138 – Minimum Age, 1973
- No. 182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999
- No. 100 – Equal Remuneration, 1951
- No. 111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958

23. In seeking to apply the principles of decent work, the Government has undertaken initiatives which are discussed under the following headings:

- Occupational Safety and Health Framework for the Workplace
- National workplace Policy on HIV/AIDS in the Workplace
- Mechanism for Monitoring the Impact and Effectiveness of Minimum Wages and
- The Development and Monitoring of a Policy to Prohibit and Eliminate Child Labour

Occupational Safety and Health Framework for the Workplace

24. In demonstration of its commitment to the promotion and application of decent work in the workplace, the Government has updated the Occupational Safety and Health legislative framework. The Occupational Safety and Health (Amendment) Act No.3 of 2006 (OSHA) ensures the safety, health and welfare of persons at work in light of the country's rapid industrialization.

Labour Inspectorate

25. The Labour Inspectorate Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development is a key mechanism for the implementation and promotion of decent work in the work place and the promotion of industrial peace in the national economy. That Unit has been ensuring compliance with labour legislation, particularly the Minimum Wages Act and its Orders.

26. In 2004-2005 the Ministry commenced the implementation of Phase I of the OAS funded project entitled "*Enhancement of the Labour Inspection Function in Selected Caribbean Countries.*" The project seeks to enhance the services of the Labour Inspectorate in Five Caribbean countries, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Barbados, Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago. Phase I, which was completed in April 2006, involved the conduct of needs assessments in each of the five countries, development of individual plans of actions and conduct of training for Labour Inspectors.

27. For the period 2006 - 2007 it is expected that a Memorandum of Understanding would be signed between the GOVERNMENT and the OAS to begin implementation of Phase II of the project. This Phase of the project proposes to conduct in-country training for Labour Inspectors, the purchase of Occupational Safety and Health monitoring and other related equipment and the follow-up to the Train the Trainers Workshop which was conducted under Phase I.

National Tripartite Workplace Policy on HIV/AIDS

28. HIV/AIDS has been recognized as an important workplace issue due to the impact on the most productive sector of the labour force, namely persons in the age cohort, 15-30. In response, the Government has appointed a Project Advisory Board (PAB) to implement a collaborative project sponsored by International Labour Organization (ILO)/the United States Department of Labour (USDOL) *on HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme – An Accelerated Response: Trinidad and Tobago 2005 – 2008*. The project aims to address the issue of HIV/AIDS in the world of work in Trinidad and Tobago, expand workplace education programmes, enhance workplace protection against stigma and discrimination and increase worker access to prevention, care and support and treatment services.

29. The Programme will also facilitate the implementation of the Five-Year National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for January 2004 to December 2008, currently under the aegis of the National AIDS Co-ordinating Committee (NACC).

30. Representatives of Government along with its tripartite partners, in collaboration with the NACC have drafted a National Tripartite Workplace Policy on HIV/AIDS. In November 2006, consultations were held on this draft, and the policy is currently being reviewed to incorporate the comments expressed at the consultation.

Mechanism for Monitoring the Impact and Effectiveness of the Minimum Wage

31. Since the increase in the national minimum wage to TT\$9.00 per hour in March 2005, the Government has been reviewing the impact of this wage and the possibility of increasing it in response to inflation as a strategy to reduce the incidence of poverty.

Development and Monitoring of Policy to Prohibit and Eliminate Child Labour

32. The Government has appointed a National Steering Committee on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago. Since its inception in August 2004, the Committee has had the responsibility for monitoring the ILO funded project for the “Removal and Rehabilitation of Child Labourers in the Beetham and Forres Park Landfill Sites.” This pilot programme was a component of the ILO/CIDA regional Child Labour project that sought to raise awareness about child labour, particularly the worst forms of child labour, and initiate policies and programmes in six Caricom countries to combat the worst forms of child labour.

33. On June 12, 2006, Trinidad and Tobago observed World Day Against Child Labour to increase awareness, particularly among parents/guardians, as to what constitutes child labour and to highlight alternatives for the economic survival of the family, while ensuring the proper development of the child. In 2006, the Committee developed a draft Policy to Prohibit and Eliminate Child Labour.

Promotion of Social Dialogue

34. The Government, in promotion of tripartism in labour relations, has collaborated with the ILO in the implementation of the Programme for the Promotion of Management-Labour Cooperation (PROMALCO), which focuses on improving labour relations between management, labour and Government. The main objective of PROMALCO is to develop the potential to innovate through workplace partnerships, respect for fundamental workers’ rights.

35. The Government remains committed to the strategy of promoting social dialogue as a prerequisite for managing the change process that result from the rapid progress of globalization. Accordingly, the Government consults with the social partners directly and through several tripartite Committees, including the following, which have been established to address particular issues: ILO 144 Tripartite Committee, Standing

Tripartite Committee on Labour Matters, Minimum Wages Board and the Labour Market Council.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

36. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of life of its people by investing in social development and creating a caring society. Government's vision is a society in which the basic needs of the people are met and each individual is given an opportunity to contribute and to self-actualise.

37. Government has spent over \$ 3 billion on 132 social sector programmes over the period. A significant percentage of this investment has been directed to education and training, housing and health care. Key initiatives are highlighted below.

Education and Training

The University of the West Indies

38. In academic year 2005/06, overall enrollment at the University of the West Indies grew at steady rate of 16 per cent. Of this, postgraduate enrollment increased by 60 per cent in academic year 2005/2006. Enrolment in UWI Distance Education programmes in Trinidad & Tobago has also been increasing. There are now 700 students enrolled in such programmes.

39. The maintenance of quality in teaching and learning remained a priority of the University as it seeks to produce graduates with knowledge, skills and competencies that are of high calibre. In order to achieve this result, considerable effort was placed at improving teaching via the training of faculty in the use of technology to enhance delivery. Academic advising was also implemented to support learning abilities. Faculty members were also exposed to critical thinking, teaching and learning seminars that were

offered to strengthen curriculum development and improve teaching and learning in the classroom. Quality assurance reviews were also completed for all academic departments.

University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT): 4 -Year Degree Programme

40. In fiscal 2005-2006, UTT focused on the following major activities:

- Infrastructural development
- Development and introduction of sectoral programmes
- Upgrade of Teacher Training Programmes
- Research
- Structures and staffing

41. The University of Trinidad and Tobago continued its charge to develop a decentralized campus structure with the establishment of the O'Meara Campus, the Chaguaramas (Marine) Campus and the establishment of the Mayaro Drilling School.

42. In 2006, the San Fernando and John Donaldson Technical Institute Programmes were integrated under the umbrella of UTT into a common National Engineering Technician Diploma and upgrades of their facilities are continuing. New programmes in manufacturing, environment and health management, as well as higher-level qualifications in energy and energy-related areas are being introduced. Corinth and Valsayn Teachers' Colleges have been also subsumed by the UTT, and the development of new teacher training programmes is currently underway. The Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (ECIAF) has been placed under the UTT as well.

43. For the academic year 2005/2006, the enrolment was 1,850 students, a 6 per cent increase over the total of 2004/2005. Additionally, 107 specialized courses, customized programmes and seminars were hosted by UTT. A total of 13 partnerships/ agreements with foreign institutions were finalized in 2006.

College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT)

44. In creating a relevant, coherent, coordinated Tertiary Education system, COSTAATT underwent organizational changes with respect to the institutions under its purview. In recognition that COSTAATT had built up a strong reputation and critical core competencies in the fields of health sciences, modern studies, arts and culture and languages, these areas were emphasized during the reconfiguration process. The institution will also concentrate on broadening access by focusing on 3 areas, namely (i) the academically under-prepared students, (ii) distance education projects, (iii) financial aid. Enrolment at COSTAATT for 2005/2006 totaled 3,837 students.

Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (THTI)

45. The Institute more than doubled its intake in its part-time programme in 2005/06 period. A total of 500 persons participated in in-plant training and short courses conducted by the Institute in the last year. In addition, an articulation agreement was forged between THTI, The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) and Service Volunteered for All (SERVOL) in this period. The Institute initiated this agreement in order to create a seamless industry education system from the vocational/skills level to higher education level.

National Energy Skills Centre (NESC)

46. The National Energy Skills Center focused on upgrading the quality and quantity of craftsmen (Level 11) required for plant construction and plant maintenance during the period October 2005 to March 2006. Additionally, emphasis was placed on satisfying the need for skilled Automotive Technicians, General Construction workers as well as providing computer literacy training for nationals.

47. The NESC was able to provide industry and other clients with industry-ready graduates trained in the following areas:

- Advanced Welding (GTAW)
- Carbon Steel Welding (SMAW)
- Pipefitting / Fabrication
- Automotive Technician
- Building Construction Technology

48. In addition, training for Caroni ex-employees was conducted in Carbon Steel Welding, Pipefitting/Fabrication, Specialized Automotive courses as well as in the Building Construction Trades.

Metal Industries Company (MIC)

49. Through National Skills Development Programme (NSDP) and Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE) Programme, MIC has been strengthening its human resource by providing critical training for its instructors in areas such as ‘Train the Trainer’, Manufacturing Engineering and Metrology. With respect to programmes being offered, the following are some notable accomplishments:

- Pan instruments were acquired for the HYPE Centres at Sangre Grande and Macoya. The Moruga Centre was officially launched in April, 2006. Classrooms are being constructed at the Moruga Building Technology Centre;
- Equipment was purchased for Mechanical Air Conditioning, Industrial and Metrology Systems;
- Curriculum has been completed for years 1 - 4 in areas of Industrial Maintenance, Electrical , Electronic, Mechanical Engineering and Welding; and
- Upgrading works on the Macoya Complex commenced.

Funding Initiatives

50. Part of Government's Vision 2020 initiative is to make tertiary education more affordable and thus accessible to all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. As such, two major funding initiatives were established in 2006 to facilitate this objective:

GATE – Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses

51. This programme caters to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago pursuing government approved tertiary education programmes (including distance learning programmes), at approved local and regional public tertiary level institutions (TLIs) as well as local private tertiary level institutions. As of January 2006, GATE was revised to cater for free tuition at the undergraduate level. Other critical changes in this programme include:

- Students who have been accepted to pursue approved postgraduate programmes of study at local and regional public tertiary level institutions would be eligible to access grants covering a maximum of 50 per cent of their tuition fees.
- The number of GATE approved private tertiary level institutions has increased to 33 as opposed to 24 from the previous year.
- The total number of GATE applications received for the academic year 2005-2006 has been 60,884
- GATE expenditure for the same period was \$179,700,000.

HELP – Higher Education Loan Programme

52. This loan facility commenced in June 2006 and is applicable to students who are in GATE approved programmes, with the exception of a few approved regional institutions. HELP replaces the Students' Revolving Loan Fund and the University Students' Guarantee Loan Fund. Loans under HELP are for a maximum of \$25,000 per year for three years for students studying in Trinidad and Tobago and \$75,000 per year for 3 years for students pursuing studies within the CARICOM region. Since its inception, 1,152 applications have been approved; the total amount that has been disbursed thus far is \$ 19,541,555.

Retraining Programme for Displaced Workers

53. The Retraining Programme is one of the 17 critical social sector programmes, which targets retrenched workers, training them in new skills and preparing them for work in an industrial environment.

54. The main objectives of the programme include:

- To provide eligible individuals (displaced or retrenched workers) with skills training that would enhance their opportunities to access a viable and lucrative employment and self-employment options;
- To train 1200 persons in each fiscal year organized as 3 cycles of training in at least 13 or more different skill areas;
- To promote life-long learning by re-training persons who have been displaced or retrenched;
- To re-skill displaced workers for more productive service in the local economy; and
- To certify trainees to National Occupational Standards through the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualifications (TTNVQ) Framework, thereby positioning them to access further education and training through the development of a seamless system of education and training.

55. During 2006, 1,580 participants benefited from the programme. Some of the achievements of the Retraining Unit over the last year included:

- the Retraining Unit held a second cycle in Tobago with 18 classes as compared to 10 in the previous cycle held there.
- Some of the skills implemented in Tobago included, the baking of bread, cakes and pastries, computer repairs, curtain and drapery, fabric design, plumbing, upholstery, hairdressing, tile-laying and floral arts. Other skills added were agro-processing, beauty therapy, events management, landscaping, leather craft, lingerie and sleepwear, television and video production.

- Some new programmes implemented in Trinidad included the introduction of lingerie and sleepwear, bread, cakes and pastries, Level II camera operations, plant propagation, multimedia animation, beauty therapy and crane operations.
- The Retraining Unit has also introduced a Prisons Programme rehabilitating inmates through training and retraining. These take place at all the prison institutions in the country, all of which conduct computer information technology skills and life skills. The Golden Grove Women's Prison has 1 class in electronics. The Golden Grove Men's Prison has 2 classes practicing electronic installations and masonry/carpentry. The Maximum State Prison has 4 classes with training in Joinery I and II, Plumbing, Welding and Upholstery.

Distance Learning

56. The Distance Learning Secretariat (DLS) seeks to facilitate a policy framework for Distance Education in Trinidad and Tobago, particularly as it relates to academic support services, assessment of learning, connectivity costs, and programme accreditation issues for tertiary education. Some of the achievements made by the Distance Learning Secretariat over the past year include:

- In June 2006, the DLS completed its first annual baseline survey of Distance and Cross Border Education.
- A Database was created on all tertiary level institutions engaged in distance and cross-border education in an attempt to evaluate the role and potential of Distance Education in widening access to tertiary education and increasing participation rates.
- The DLS represented Trinidad and Tobago in a coalition project with the Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN) to inform the development of e-learning and e-teaching in the region.
- The DLS, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, jointly hosted the first in a series of content development workshops for local curriculum specialists and content developers in October 2006.

- The development of a National Knowledge Portal Development: a Portal Prototype design was completed.
- Development of Community Access Centres (CAC):
 - A 3 month pilot for the CAC project was launched in October 2006;
 - 2 centres were commissioned, one in Couva South and the other in Belle Gardens – Tobago;
 - The training of instructors was completed and the CAC Portal was installed for these centres; and
 - The DLS also installed the Moodle Learning Management System in these centres.
- The DLS has supplied interactive content for Small Business Development and finding work sourced from South Africa, free e-books and aptitude tests.
- The Government approved the National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago (NOSTT).

Life Skills

57. The Life Skills Department has established the Ministry of Science Technology & Tertiary Education (MSTTE) Life Skills Curriculum for tutors of current programmes. The curriculum is available to tutors on CDs and is already in use by those in the Multi-sector Skills Training (MuST) programme, the On-the-Job-Training (OJT) programme, Retraining, Rehabilitating Inmates Programme, Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) and other programmes at the UTT, YTEPP, and TTHTI.

Achievements of the Life Skills Department include:

- Completion of a trainee handbook which is in use by the OJT;
- Completion of a first draft of the MuST trainee handbook;.

- A Life Skills Portfolio was also established to be used by the OJT and Retraining programmes to do performance appraisals (PALS) to assist the process of improving and re-hiring the best Life Skills tutors; and
- Train the Trainer Workshops were held in 2006 and over 90 tutors within and outside of the Ministry gained the opportunity to learn the methodology and content of life skills.

Multi-Sector Skills Training (MuST)

58. The MuST programme is a specialized craft-training programme that provides skills training on actual construction sites and properties in the Construction and Hospitality and Tourism sectors.

59. Since its inception in 2004 the total number of trainees exposed to MuST has been 5,119, with 3,283 persons completing the programme. In 2006, some 1,920 persons graduated from cycles 15-22, for Trinidad while some 146 graduates completed cycles 4 and 8 in Tobago. There has been vertical growth within the programme with the recruitment of 100 additional technical instructors.

60. Level I of the MuST programme includes unskilled general construction workers, who work as assistants to skilled labourers for 6 months on a stipend of \$60 per day. Level II which was launched in November 2006 caters for specialized craftsmen for a period of 9 months on a stipend of \$90 per day. There has also been an expansion of the programme into Level II, with further recruitment of 100 Technology Instructors whereby Level I trainees can now be trained as specialized craftsmen.

61. The Occupational areas include Masonry, plumbing, painting, carpentry, and weeding, tile-laying and electrical installation.

62. For the Tourism and Hospitality sector, the occupational areas include food preparation, food and beverage service, property upkeep, housekeeping, and front desk operations.

On The Job Training

63. The OJT Programme is a key training initiative of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago geared at reducing unemployment among the nation's youth through providing viable employment opportunities. In the past year, the programme has hosted six graduation exercises which yielded 8,200 graduates. Several initiatives were pursued that contributed to a more effective OJT Programme in 2005/06. Some of these initiatives are highlighted hereunder:

- Re-installation and re-launching of the OJT database
- Upgrading and continuing distribution of Handbook distributed to Trainees.
- Drafting of Training Provider Handbook.
- Escalation in use of the Programme by Private Sector Providers, particularly in the recruitment of Level 1 Trainees, as a result of heightened marketing activity.
- Publication and distribution across the public and private sectors, of an OJT newsletter, prepared by and geared to Trainees on the Programme.

64. The OJT programme received an allocation of \$84 million to facilitate operations of the programme for fiscal year 2005-2006. Estimated total expenditure for this fiscal period was \$78,121,403.

Youth Training Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP)

65. YTEPP is promoting entrepreneurial development by providing programmes that translate into small businesses and as a result are referring graduates to National Entrepreneurship Development Company (NEDCO) for training, advice and funding. Individuals who prematurely exit the school system are being targeted by YTEPP programmes in order to bring them back into the training and education system so as to

increase their productive contribution to society. Government allocated \$40 million to the programme for the 2005 fiscal year and the estimated expenditure also amounted to \$40 million. Approximately 6,577 persons benefited from the training offered by YTEPP during 2006. Of these beneficiaries, 2,860 were male and 3,717 were female. In the future, YTEPP plans to increase trainee intake by 50% over a two-year period and offer training facilities to an estimated 10,000 persons annually.

Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE)

66. A total of 1,243 young persons were trained: 1,032 males and 211 females. These trainees included 7 young offenders from the Youth Training Centre. A total of 768 trainees received TTNVQ certification as well as MIC/HYPE certification. The Allocation for 2005/2006 totaled \$30Million.

67. The Government's housing development projects encourage on-the-job training by contractors. The Helping Young People Earn (HYPE) training programme of the Government is being used to supplement construction skills and trainees of the Multi-sector Skills Training Program (MUST) are also being employed in the housing development projects.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

68. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) is a programme under the Ministry of National Security and is a key vehicle for the provision of skills training to thousands of "risk" youth across the country. Educational and vocational training is provided to young persons between the ages 18 to 25, who are not academically inclined and who are unemployed or unemployable. The programme focuses on attitudinal and skill development training in an efficient, effective, disciplined and caring manner to young adults. It also focuses on entrepreneurship, self-discipline and concern for the environment and provides post training job placement assistance for participants.

69. The CCC had an output of 2,261 young adults for the 2006 fiscal year. Of those benefiting from the programme during this fiscal year, 954 were male 1,307 were female.

Housing

70. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago views housing as a basic human need and is committed to ensuring that all citizens have access to adequate and affordable housing. Government's strategy has focused on addressing the two dimensions of the housing problem – insufficient supply of adequate housing and affordability. Government is also not merely concerned with the provision of housing units but the creation of quality communities which are well planned, socially and economically balanced – in short, building sustainable communities. Some of the key initiatives which have been implemented over the period are detailed below.

Mortgage Financing

71. Subsidised mortgage rates are available to eligible homeowners for homes costing below \$450,000. In addition, a reduction in the deposit requirement for accessing mortgage loans has enabled prospective homeowners to obtain mortgages of 95 per cent of the construction cost.

Rent-to-Own Programme

72. This programme was introduced to ensure that individuals were able to achieve on a phased basis their long term goal of acquiring a house. This programme targets low and middle income individuals who do not meet the financial requirements to secure mortgage financing.

Accelerated High Density Housing Programme

73. The objective of this programme is provide affordable and adequate housing to the low and middle income segments of the population. Government has indicated that its target is the construction of 100, 000 housing units over a ten year period. Sub programmes include the Infill Programme, the Urban Renewal Programme, and the establishment of New Towns.

Second National Settlements Programme

74. The Second National Settlements Programme is an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funded programme intended to provide basic services, communal facilities and formal land tenure documents to over 5,000 families on designated sites across the country. Sub projects under this programme include Regularisation and regeneration of communities, provision of housing subsidies, and squatter regularization.

Health

75. The health status of the population has improved over the period with the incidence of infectious and communicable diseases declining significantly. Trinidad and Tobago now has a national epidemiological profile compared to that of the more developed countries. Several initiatives have been implemented to enhance the quality of the life of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, some of which are indicated below.

Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP)

76. This programme was expanded to provide universal coverage to persons suffering from the following eleven diseases and who are in need of drugs:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Cardiac disease
- Depression
- Arthritis
- Parkinson disease
- Glaucoma
- Asthma
- Enlarged prostate
- Acid reflux
- Epilepsy

77. The key objectives of the CDAP programme are to reduce the burden on dispensaries and patient waiting time at public health institutions by providing additional dispensing facilities across the country – effectively bringing health care services closer to the people and to reduce the cost of health care to those who are unable to pay. As at July 2006, 230,000 persons had benefitted from the programme and a total of 240 pharmacies had participated in the programme.

Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases (HIV/AIDS)

78. Government's strategic plan for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS has led to the reduction in the number of deaths and the rate of increase in the incidence of HIV infection. The plan is built around four strategies: prevention, treatment care and support, advocacy and human rights and surveillance and research.

Special Programme for Chronic Diseases

79. A special program was established for the treatment of Adult Cardiac Disease, the aim of which is to improve access to cardiac surgery for persons who are unable to afford the cost of care, through the provision of subsidised cardiac surgery at the Eric Williams Financial Complex. In addition, renal dialysis services has been expanded to provide services to the general population.

Tissue Transplants

80. Regulations to effect the Tissue Transplant Act have been completed which legalizes the harvesting, storage and transplanting of tissue from cadavers and live donors have been completed. A Tissue Transplant Unit is now in operation and tissue transplants, using live donors have commenced.

Improvements in Health Care Services Delivery

81. Government has also invested in infrastructure upgrade and has opened several new health centres, commissioned additional operating theatres, and purchased state of the art diagnostic equipment such as mammography and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machines.

Reduction in Surgical Waiting Lists

82. Significant inroads have been made in the reduction of waiting lists for cataract, orthopaedic and certain gynaecological surgeries. The waiting list for hernias has been eliminated and is now down to same day surgery. In addition, government has facilitated over thousands of surgical procedures over the period.

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

83. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to enhancing Democratic Governance by increasing transparency and accountability in public institutions, promoting an independent judiciary, a free press, and a vibrant civil society. It also remains firm in reducing crime and lawlessness. In this regard, the Government's role is to set the strategy, provide the resources and the appropriate legal framework and lead by example.

Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism

84. Trinidad and Tobago ratified the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism and has made significant contributions by way of providing staff to the Secretariat as well as implementing the Inter-American Tourism and Recreational Facilities Security Programme.

Border Management

85. The International Organisation for Migration has provided the Immigration Department with a technical cooperation plan to assist the Government in its border management project. The expected result is an enhanced border security system with broad information exchange capacity and interoperability at the national and regional level, up-to-date comprehensive policy and legal frameworks and a trained cadre of professional equipped to meet the migration and security challenges of the country.

Strategic Alliances with International Agencies

86. The Government has embarked upon initiatives aimed at forging alliances with international agencies in an effort to learn from their best practices and benefit from their technical advice in the area of law enforcement. Two such initiatives were the retention of detectives from the United Kingdom, and the State Partnership Programme which the

Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force entered into with the National Guard of the State of Delaware.

Infrastructure Upgrade

87. During the period under review, Phase I of the Police Station Repair and Refurbishment Programme was completed. This phase specifically targeted the repair and refurbishment of police change rooms, air conditioning units, bathroom facilities, kitchen, ceiling and reception areas so as to provide a more comfortable working environment for the nation's police officers. A total of 51 police stations have been upgraded in this phase.

Transformation of the Police Service

88. The transformation of the police service was accelerated during the period under review. The Government is being assisted in this initiative by Professor Stephen Matrofski and Partners of the George Mason University of Virginia, USA, the Justice & Security Strategies Inc and Penn State University. The following initiatives have been implemented:

- Restructuring of the Police Complaints Unit
- Creation of a Homicide Prevention Working Group
- Re-establishment and formalization of the Homicide Bureau of Investigation
- Review of the Training Curriculum for Recruits
- Development Training for Police Officers

Introduction of a New Public Sector Procurement Regime

89. Legislation for the New Public Sector Procurement Regime was drafted. The new regime will develop the legal and regulatory framework, establish a procurement

regulatory agency and establish procurement units in all ministries and agencies to support a decentralized procurement process.

Strengthening of the Integrity Commission

90. The integrity commission has identified three priorities to direct its activities. These include: promotion of an institutional culture of openness, transparency, accountability and appropriate personal privacy, taking action on the issue of corruption, and inducing and exemplifying integrity in public life and throughout public organizations.

CONCLUSION

91. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the Summit of the Americas Process and has demonstrated this commitment not only by its decision to host the 2009 Summit in Port of Spain but also by the conscientious measures that have been undertaken to fulfill the mandates of previous Summits. The themes selected for the Summit Process have proven to be relevant to Trinidad and Tobago's own development agenda and dovetails with decisions taken by this country in the hemispheric forum, for example, its decision to host the XV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour (IACML) in September 2007.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to report that these actions and initiatives have made significant contribution towards enhancing the lives of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.