



**Address**

**By**

**Senator, The Honourable Conrad Enill**

**Minister of Energy and Energy Industries**

**At the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Annual Christmas Dinner**

**and Awards Ceremony of the**

**Quarry Association of Trinidad and Tobago.**

**Venue: Andre Kamperveen Hall, Center of Excellence,**

**Trincity**

**Date: October 31<sup>st</sup> 2009**

**Time: 7pm-9pm**

- Mr. Ramdeo Persad – President, Quarry Association of Trinidad;
  
- Executive members of the Association;
  
- Mr. Richard Oliver - Director of Minerals, Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries;
  
- Members of the Quarry Association of Trinidad and Tobago;
  
- Specially Invited Guests;
  
- Members of the Media;

Mr. President,

I am delighted to be able to join you, in this, celebration, of the Quarries Association of Trinidad and Tobago, at this your 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Annual Christmas Party.

Your Association, like so many others was formed as a result of challenges in the quarry industry; and I therefore wish at the onset to say that we are pleased with your efforts at representing the views of your stakeholders to the Government.

Vision 2020 is a strategic plan designed to create in Trinidad and Tobago, the conditions in which our society can achieve a high quality of success in a number of specific areas.

One question that your industry must answer is, are you in step with the government.

Is there alignment between the objectives of your association and that of the Government?

The Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries in pursuing its Vision 2020 objective has made the following key decisions.

On the objective of Innovative people our goals are Scholarships for Nationals of Trinidad and Tobago and supporting UTT. On the objective of Competitive Business our goal is competitive bidding rounds, Review of Fiscal terms, review of contractual arrangements and new added value gas-based Industries. On the objective of a Caring Society our goals are community development, relocation/

compensation plans for residents in Energy Development areas. On the objective of Infrastructure and the Environment our goals are new Industrial Ports, New Industrial Estates, additions to Pipeline Network and the upgrade of Service Stations. On the objective of Governing Effectively our goals are the transformation of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries and Examination of potential for a National Integrated Energy Company.

Your industry faces some major challenges which include among others:

- The ability to build up capacity to meet the increased production demands;
- Investment in plant and machinery, which requires access to aggregate resources of suitable quality;
- Satisfying community environmental concerns and expectations;
- Illegal quarrying operations
- Non-compliance with the licensing process;
- Rehabilitation issues; and
- Technology and Human Resources issues.

This is quite frankly not unlike the global Quarry Industry who must address: land use conflict, effluent discharge, and health and safety issues.

If we assumed that the British have a good system then we can determine whether our challenges are unique. The data shows that these challenges were faced in the early development of the industry in Britain; however, they were successfully mitigated. It follows therefore that in Trinidad and Tobago we can be successful.

This Government has a responsibility to manage the quarry industry, to facilitate national infrastructural development.

We propose to continue to support the industry by ensuring that policies are enforced, all intended, to deliver a better quality product and service to the citizens of this country.

Your business, like so many others, must deal with the many risks and challenges that exist, as a consequence of the growth and development of the Quarry Industry. \*

However, this event is an important opportunity for you to network, as key players in the industry. This initiative, allows members a golden opportunity to exchange views and ideas and the possibility to conduct business.

This business of quarrying is a vital economic activity and your attendance here tonight is an indication of your commitment to the ongoing development of this industry.

As producers of what we consider the essential basic building blocks for community infrastructure; you have a role to

play in the country's wider economic development.

As the infrastructural development programme continues to expand, this Government values the important contribution that your industry has made.

This business of quarrying has shown increased growth over the past five (5) years, as a direct result of this Government's initiative to achieve 'developed nation' status by the year 2020.

Allow me the next few minutes to highlight the accomplishments of this Ministry's initiative, which has contributed to the advancement of this industry, and in keeping with Government's 2020 Vision.

- Allocation of State Lands for Quarrying Purposes;

In August 2009, the Ministry of Energy issued seven (7) quarry licences for the quarrying of sand and gravel blocks

comprising of 670 acres in Valencia. These were put out for tender in November 2008.

The Government recognising the high demand for quarry lands, recently awarded an additional twelve (12) new blocks for the quarrying of unutilised gravel lands in public interest.

At this point, the Ministry is in the process of issuing licences for operators who have met the requirements for a two (2) year licence.

It is expected that a further award of lands, in public interest, will be undertaken to satisfy the market demand for quarry materials.

- Renewal of Quarry Licences;

The Ministry has approved twenty-two (22) renewals of quarry licences for a five (5) year period, for quarry operators who have satisfied the requirements for the grant of a licence.

Additionally, five (5) year licences have been approved for fourteen (14) operators

on private lands for the purpose of quarrying.

- Rehabilitation of Explosive Bunkers at Chaguaramas;

In April of this year, Cabinet agreed to an estimated cost of \$6,238,790.00 for the rehabilitation of the explosive bunkers at Bachelor Hall Road, Covigne Valley, Chaguaramas.

- Tar Sands Project;

In January of this year, the Government approved the grant of a licence to explore the tar sands deposits to quantify the recoverable reserves of bitumen and determine the appropriate process plant technology for the production of synthetic crude.

This resource covers approximately 7900 acres of the Parrylands/Guapo fields and has preliminary reserve estimates of two (2) billion barrels of oil in place.

- Strategic Environmental Impact Study;

The Government has approved to the conduct of a nationwide Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment study to identify the impacts of quarrying with respect to air, water and pollution on the flora, fauna and ground water.

The study would also provide for the establishment of mining zones in which a level of control and order would be associated with quarrying activities and a measure of comfort within resident communities.

- National Quarries Company Limited;

In April of this year, Cabinet approved the sum of \$1,500,000.00 to the National Quarries Company Limited for the conduct of a Resistivity Survey of the sand and gravel quarry at Turure Road, Valencia.

The company will attempt to quantify the reserves of sand and gravel from the surface to a depth of three (300) feet. This will provide for the optimal recovery of the deep gravels to a depth of twenty-five (25) feet.

I take this opportunity to address a number of issues I have been asked to comment on.

- Status of the New Quarries Legislation;

The legislation was completely redrafted and the Mineral Resources Act and Mineral Resources Regulations were proposed in accordance with international industry best practice.

Additionally, Tar Sands Regulations and the Geological Survey Act were also redrafted.

The Ministry proposes to withdraw the ‘Policy White Paper’ and replace it with the “Minerals Resources Policy White Paper”.

This key policy shift involves the replacement of the Quarries Authority by the Minerals Resources Agency.

- Termination of Illegal Quarrying;

The Ministry of Energy in association with the Ministry of National Security has set up

a plan to monitor and terminate illegal quarrying activities on an ongoing basis.

These measures include routine monitoring of quarrying activities by the Ministry of Energy and the preparation of maps identifying locations of the illegal quarry sites using GPS coordinates.

- Royalty payments and the Performance Bond on privately owned lands;

Performance bonds serves as a security deposit for non-payment of royalties, dues or any breach of the terms and conditions stipulated in the licence.

Therefore, it does NOT only stand as security for “royalty payments”, which are currently ONLY being paid by operators on state lands.

At this present time, private land owners are not accountable for the payment of royalties to the state, whether or not they are in ownership of the mineral rights to the land.

I trust I have addressed your concerns and I would like to reiterate that you are all part of an industry that can look forward with optimism and pride.

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, allow me the opportunity to congratulate all tonight's award recipients and extend best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a highly successful New Year.

I thank you.