

Remarks By
The Honourable Nicole Olivierre
Minister of Energy and Energy Industries

Pointe-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust
50th Anniversary

Tuesday 8th December 2015

Petrea Place

Pointe-a-Pierre

Thank You, Master of Ceremonies

SALUTATIONS:

- ✓ Their Excellencies Mr. Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona S.C. President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Mrs. Reema Carmona
- ✓ Major General Edmund Dillion, Minister of National Security
- ✓ The Right Honourable Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC Commonwealth Secretary General
- ✓ His Worship Karim Hosein, Major of San Fernando
- ✓ Ms. Molly Gaskin President of the Wildfowl Trust
- ✓ Mr. Andrew Jupiter Chairman of Petrotrin
- ✓ Mr. Fitzroy Harewood, President of Petrotrin
- ✓ Mr. Tomas Bermudez IDB Country Representative
- ✓ Ms. Maria Rivera Senior Advisor, Americas RAMSAR Secretariat
- ✓ Mrs. Karilyn Shephard Vice President P-a-P Wildfowl Trust
- ✓ Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- ✓ Other Specially Invited Guests
- ✓ Members of the Media
- ✓ Ladies and Gentlemen

Compliments of the Season and Good Afternoon All!

It is my distinct honour to attend this milestone celebration. Let me, on behalf of the Prime Minister and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago extend sincerest congratulations to the Board and Management of the Wild Fowl Trust on this momentous achievement. This is indeed a significant event not only for the Trust but for Trinidad and Tobago as well.

Through the years this Trust has made its mark on every aspect of the environment by being pioneers in environmental education and public awareness, promoting and lobbying for the protection of the country's biodiversity, the judicious use of its natural assets and improved environmental policies which integrate issues of Trinidad and Tobago's health and socio-economic well-being.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago also shares this passion for the environment and firmly believes that we must all do our part to

conserve our natural resources for the benefit of our communities and our families, and future generations. One of our key environmental commitments is to focus on reconnecting people with nature by increasing the acreage for green public spaces and enhancing our physical amenities to promote the enjoyment, cultural and spiritual enrichment of all citizens. We are also committed to increasing environmental awareness programmes among children and young adults, to promote an understanding of the central role of the environment in securing our survival and our future.

As an energy-based economy we have seen the drastic fall in oil prices over the past year and the resultant impacts. Being part of the global energy framework, the Trinidad and Tobago energy sector has not been immune from the fallout of this low-price environment. We recognize that it is not business as usual and innovative changes are required to ensure that the sector remains viable and progresses in a sustainable manner.

The need for economic diversification however, has been a standard policy prescription for many years, as successive oil shocks have shown.

We are a country that is rich in resources and as such we must examine those resources and come up with innovative ways to utilize them for our benefit while ensuring their protection.

The eco-tourism industry is a rapidly growing one worldwide and Trinidad and Tobago has a rich stock of natural attractions and an established network of protected areas in the form of forest reserves, sanctuaries, and wetlands. This includes the Wild Fowl Trust, the Caroni Bird Sanctuary, the ASA Wright Nature Centre and the Buccoo Reef just to name a few. The Wild Fowl Trust has long been considered an ecotourism paradise by local and international birders, botanists, photographers and researchers alike. Indeed it can be regarded as a natural phenomenon as it shares its acreage with an oil refinery and exists within an industrial environment which adds to its uniqueness.

Petrotrin as the state-owned energy Company and through its various predecessors has been a supporter of the Wild Fowl Trust since its inception and continues to support the organization and its initiatives. Petrotrin, your commitment is to be commended. It is also important to recognize all of the other Companies and Organizations who have supported and continue to support the trust.

This country like most others is concerned about all aspects of environmental conservation and protection including the impact of climate change especially on island nations. Therefore we support and commend initiatives that seek to uphold these tenets. The conservation of our land and sea areas, our wildlife and marine species, our green public places and their rich diversity are a source of pride for our nationals and for the tourists that visit our shores. As such we are proud to boast of treasures like the Wild Fowl Trust here in Trinidad and Tobago.

As I noted earlier, the work done by this organization has made its mark on every aspect of the environment and I want to commend the members and supporters of this organization for the outstanding work that you have been doing.

In closing I take this opportunity to congratulate the Wild Fowl Trust on its 50th Anniversary. I encourage you to continue to be pioneers in environmental stewardship.

I congratulate you on behalf of the Prime Minister, and the Government and on my own behalf and that of my family. As a member of the trust for the past seven years I thank you for providing this space where my children have the pleasure of interacting freely with nature in a safe, learning environment.

I Thank You.