



OPM

Quarterly

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ISSUE 3



ENERGY COOPERATION: Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela

Prime Minister Rowley's Christmas Family Portrait



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MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE DR. KEITH ROWLEY

Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Season's Greetings to all our readers.



The well-known saying that "time and tide wait for no man" certainly has held true for this year. It's quite hard to believe that we are already at the end of another year, preparing to celebrate the joyous occasion of Christmas.

As we close the year, it is my pleasure to share with you the 3rd edition of the OPM Quarterly. I also take this opportunity to thank you for the support you have given to the editorial team and your input into making the OPM Quarterly a success.

Our final edition for 2016 gives a preview of some of Government's key areas of focus for the New Year, in particular Local Government Reform and the strategic thrust for augmenting our natural gas supply to local industries. Both of these projects, in their own right, are intended to facilitate increased efficiency, productivity and prosperity for our communities and country.

On behalf of the Cabinet and on my own behalf, I thank all OPM staff for your assistance over the past year and I look forward to your continued co-operation in 2017, as we work together to build a Nation of which we can all be proud.

From my family to yours, I wish you all very Merry Christmas and a safe, peace-filled and prosperous New Year.

Dr the Honourable Keith Rowley

Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

GREETINGS FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY



Permanent Secretary Jones at the official handover ceremony of the St. Joseph Police Station.

My dear colleagues,

I know that many of you are in the midst of hectic preparations for the Christmas Season while also fulfilling your role as a staff member of the Office of the Prime Minister.

As we carefully juggle our many responsibilities, I take this opportunity to remind you not to become so overwhelmed by the demands of the Season that you forget to enjoy this wonderful celebration of the birth of the Christ Child.

I am also pleased to inform you that our Strategic Review exercise has resulted in a new Vision and Mission for the Office of the Prime Minister.

Through your suggestions and feedback, the OPM is re-purposing itself for better alignment with Government's Strategic Policy. In this regard I now share with you our new Vision and Mission statements:

To be the Hallmark of Excellence in the Public Service

Vision Statement

Mission Statement

We provide Unstinting Support to the Prime Minister in executing his Constitutional Responsibilities to Trinidad and Tobago

In 2017, our Vision and Mission Statements must become our professional benchmark in the performance of our duties and tasks at the OPM and I encourage all staff members to familiarize yourself with the OPM's new Vision and Mission.

I look forward to working with you as we continue to deliver quality service to both our internal and external customers.

Do have a great Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Mrs Sandra Jones

Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister and Head of the Public Service

A Word from our EDITOR IN CHIEF



Let me first take this opportunity to extend best wishes to everyone as we look forward to a safe, happy and productive 2017.

The past year has seen us, as a nation, face various challenges and we have experienced dome exhilarating highs and some disappointing lows. We have stayed the course and the Office of the Prime Minister continues to be a hallmark of leadership as the seat of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

In this, our third issue of the OPM Quarterly, we will take a look at key Government initiatives over the preceding three month period, which we expect many of you will have some interest. We examine Government's plans for local government reform and important developments in the energy sector as it relates to Venezuela, which we expect will have a positive impact on our economy. Of course we cannot present an end of year issue and not touch Christmas celebrations.

In this issue we also shine the spotlight on some OPM staff members who have made significant accomplishments in various spheres. We are ever mindful that people are the life blood of the organisation and their dedicated service and personal accomplishments auger well for continues development.

I therefore invite you to peruse the pages of yet another issue of the OPM Quarterly. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you.

*Ms. Arlene Gorin-George,
Press Secretary - Office of
the Prime Minister.*

OPM Staff!

To make contributions to the OPM Quarterly simply contact the Public Information and Communications Unit at 622-1625 ext: 2156.

DID YOU KNOW

NEIGHBOURING NATIONS **working together**

On Monday 5th December 2016, Prime Minister Rowley travelled to Caracas, Venezuela to conclude a government to government energy cooperation agreement. Essentially, this new agreement provides that Trinidad and Tobago will function as a commercial outlet for identified Venezuelan hydro-carbon resources.

According to the agreement, both parties (the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago) have agreed to take reasonable steps to facilitate;

- a) the development, construction, operation and maintenance of one or more pipelines from the Marisol Sucre region in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago including a pipeline from the Dragon field to the Hibiscus platform;
- b) the delivery of gas from fields in north eastern offshore area of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela known as the Marisol Sucre region to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and;
- c) the sale of natural gas volumes to the domestic market, gas market, of Trinidad and Tobago as a priority and international markets.

In addition to the economic benefits of Trinidad and Tobago taking the product to market, this agreement also addresses the issue of insufficient available gas quantities being available to local industries. Over the past few years, this challenge has resulted in decreased production and even loss of revenue. However, the new energy cooperation agreement will allow for a sustained a sufficient supply of gas from Venezuelan fields to industries in Trinidad and Tobago.

Also participating in this project are the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago (NGC), Royal Dutch Shell and Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A., the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company.

The new energy cooperation agreement will allow for a sustained a sufficient supply of gas from Venezuelan fields to industries in Trinidad and Tobago.



Prime Minister Rowley observes the Venezuelan guard of honour upon his arrival at the Presidential Palace in Caracas.



Prime Minister Dr. Rowley and PDVSA President, Eulogio del Pino, sign the energy cooperation agreement.



Dr. Rowley and President Maduro enjoy the performance of a traditional dance.



Members of the delegations from both Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela during discussions.



Prime Minister Keith Rowley and President Nicolás Maduro Moros during the salute by the Venezuelan guard of honour.

Local Government Reform

The new legislation will empower local regional corporations to govern their own regions.

For decades, many of you would have heard successive administrations make sweeping promises about Local Government Reform but with little action actually being taken. However, this administration is determined to change this scenario of inaction, as the Prime Minister himself has given his personal commitment to the cause.

Legislation to reform Local Government has already been drafted by the Minister in the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs, the Honourable Stuart Young. The new legislation will empower local regional corporations to govern their own regions.

Between December 2015 and April 2016, 14 local government reform consultations were held in each region to ensure that you, the citizens of T&T, had a say in the development of your community

Local government bodies will be given a new structure, additional financing and increased manpower to handle their new responsibilities.

Corporations will be allowed to retain certain

taxes collected within their boundaries and councillors will be employed full time.

Regional corporations will be given statutory authority to handle a broad range of new responsibilities, including:

- Social services delivery
- School maintenance
- Maintenance of recreation grounds
- Local tourism, and disaster management.

A total of 1,400 new municipal police officers will be employed to do community policing. That breaks down to 100 new municipal police officers in each corporation, with the recruits coming from their own areas.

The new organisational structure of the Regional Corporations will also create employment for young engineers, quantity surveyors and other graduates, as well as community based contractors - all of whom will now have the opportunity for self-improvement and the enhancement of their communities.

Prime Minister attends swearing-in ceremonies



Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, congratulates His Worship Joel Martinez on his election as Mayor of the City of Port of Spain while Senator the Honourable Kazim Hosein, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, and other newly sworn-in aldermen look on.



Prime Minister Dr. Rowley greets Ms. Susan Hong following her election as Chairman of the Diego Martin Corporation. Also present are members of the Government and newly elected corporation members.



Prime Minister Rowley congratulates the newly elected Mayor of the City of San Fernando, His Worship Junia Regrello today (Wednesday 14th December, 2016). Looking on are members of Government as well as newly appointed members of the San Fernando City Corporation.

BY THE HONOURABLE DR. KEITH ROWLEY ON THE OCCASION OF CHRISTMAS 2016

Fellow citizens

In the spirit of the Christmas Season, I extend sincere wishes for a safe, joyous and happy Christmas to the Christian community, from the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago.

In my Christmas message last year I noted that 2016 may prove to be a challenging year for us in Trinidad and Tobago. But I also acknowledged that, as a people, we have an incredible spirit of resourcefulness and resilience which would allow us to overcome any difficulties in our path.

I am truly heartened to say that as a Nation we have stayed the course, making the sacrifices that have become necessary to ensure that we emerge from this period of adjustment stronger and more prosperous.

The religious traditions of the Christmas period ask the Christian community to put unconditional trust in God's plan of salvation... a child would be sent to us, to grow and live among ordinary people and He would teach us love, sacrifice and forgiveness.

As we celebrate this festive occasion, in that same spirit of love and care, I ask you to spare a thought for our regional and international neighbours still overcoming the impact of on-going conflicts and environmental disasters.

Here at home we remember the mem-

bers of our own communities – most recently Matelot, Madamas, Brasso Seco – who are re-building their homes and lives following unanticipated and uncharacteristic climatic conditions. During this Christmas season let us continue to demonstrate our compassion for our brothers and sisters in need by sharing what we have with those who have lost their homes and other belongings during the year.

At this time I also ask that we keep in our prayers the families who have lost loved ones through violent or other unfortunate circumstances. To you, I offer my deepest sympathy and condolences. May the hope that this Season symbolizes give you the courage to move forward, in spite of your loss, trusting in the love and power of God.

As the year draws to a close, even in the midst of our Christmas celebrations, we all have an opportunity to reflect on the past year – our accomplishments, expectations met and those areas where we have underachieved. Perhaps, more importantly we may now re-set our goals and expectations in line with new-found knowledge and greater clarity of vision.

I especially call on each citizen, each family and each community to remain optimistic about the future of our country.

While I acknowledge that we are witnessing unacceptable levels of miscon-



duct on the part of some of our citizens in our country today, I also give you the assurance that Government continues to make the issue of crime prevention our highest priority.

I and my Cabinet colleagues, along with the members of the National Security Council, the Police Service and the Defence Force, are taking all the necessary steps and exploring all the avenues that are available to us, to ensure the safety and comfort of the citi-

zens of this country.

Moving into the New Year, I want all of us in Trinidad and Tobago to focus on the positive developments that are taking place for our country – our collaboration with the Government of Venezuela to access natural gas for our downstream industries; the imminent proclamation of the Procurement Legislation; Government's move to enact Whistleblower Protection legislation; the streamlining of the Primary

School Curriculum; improvement of our healthcare delivery systems, the re-modeling of Government's housing construction programme and our new thrust in re-shaping the tourism product we offer to the visitors to our shores. All of these initiatives are designed to uplift our country and position us as a thriving, advanced and progressive Nation.

Let us therefore resolve to make 2017 a year of peace, productivity and pros-

perity. Let us carry that excitement, joy and hope that we feel today, as we celebrate the Christmas Season with family and friends, into the New Year. More importantly, let us continue to aspire and work together to realise the success I know this country is capable of achieving.

I and my family extend to each and every citizen in Trinidad and Tobago a safe and happy Christmas season and an enjoyable New Year.

END GENDER BASED VIOLENCE NOW!



The Gender and Child Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister hosted an Information Fair in commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism on Tuesday 6th December 2016 at the Brian Lara Promenade, Port of Spain.

The event brought together various organisations which focus on gender related issues including gender based violence, child welfare and family planning.

Members of the public had the opportunity to engage in conversations with representatives from the organisations present. Additionally, they were further enlightened on various ways to promote gender equality and equity for all.

The fair proved to be a well-needed reminder that we all have a role to play in ensuring the well-being of our fellow citizens.

For more information on projects by the Gender and Child Affairs Division and to find out how you can get involved visit their website: <http://www.opm-gca.gov.tt/>



Members of the public participate in the Information Fair.

LAUNCH OF THE NACC

In December 2016, thirty-one (31) individuals received letters of appointment as members of the National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC). The NACC is a multi-sectoral body established to co-ordinate the national response to HIV and AIDS. The establishment of the committee was approved by Cabinet in February of 2016 following the decision to return the responsibility for co-ordination of the national response to the Office of the Prime Minister.

The committee comprises of representatives from government ministries, persons living with HIV/AIDS, civil society, faith based organisations, academic and research institutions, trade unions, private sector, youth, the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and UN organisations. The NACC will be operational for an initial period of two years and will be supported by a Secretariat in the Office of the Prime Minister.

The mandate of the NACC *inter alia* is to:

Build and deepen multi-sectoral partnership with the public, private and non-government sectors to achieve national commitment, support and ownership of the response to HIV and AIDS

Determine the future evolution of the NACC into a statutory body

Co-ordinate and support activities pursuant to the reduction of the people's susceptibility to HIV and AIDS

Establish goals and targets of the priority strategic areas

Monitor and evaluate the implementation and attainment of national goals, objectives and targets with respect to HIV and AIDS as identified in the national strategic plan

Define a national HIV policy and provide guidance on sectoral policies



Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, the Hon. Ayanna Webster-Roy, the Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh – Minister of Health, Minister of Social Development and Family Services – the Hon. Cherie-Ann Crichtlow-Cockburn and newly appointed members of the NACC.

Champion and accelerate the legislative agenda required to support HIV and AIDS responses, programmes and plans

Undertake multidisciplinary research on issues related to the social, economic and psychological antecedents and impacts of HIV and AIDS on individuals, families, communities, businesses and other sectors

Build the capacity of stakeholders to mount an effective response

Co-ordinate and provide guidance on the activities of HIV co-ordinators in the various ministries

Approve budgets and funding required for implementation of HIV response processes

The goals of the National Strategic Plan 2013 to 2018 are: to reduce the incidence of HIV infections in Trinidad and Tobago; to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS on persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS and to reduce HIV and AIDS related stigma and discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

SIP RALLY

Prime Minister Dr the Hon Keith Rowley delivered the feature address at the School Improvement Project (SIP) on Wednesday November 16, 2016, at the Grand Stand, Queen's Park Savannah. The School Improvement Project targets twenty-five (25) primary and secondary schools in the Morvant/ Laventille area. The project is geared towards the holistic development of the child and brings together key stakeholders including the Ministry of Education, principals, teachers, parents, students and the community. The program focuses on improving infrastructure and aesthetics, literacy and teacher training and development, student violence and indiscipline as well as parenting in education.

At the rally, Prime Minister Rowley encouraged students to never be deterred by anyone's underestimation of them saying, "We are not all the same but we are all very valuable... Children of Laventille, let nobody tell you what you should be – you must tell yourselves. Let no one tell you that you can't get there because of where you come from."



Prime Minister Rowley acknowledges the energetic greeting of students at the rally.



Prime Minister Dr. Rowley and delegates at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2016 High Level Caribbean Forum.

IMF CARIBBEAN FORUM

The Honourable Dr. Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, addressed the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 2016 High Level Caribbean Forum at the Hyatt Regency this on Wednesday 2nd November, 2016. This is the second time that the High Level Forum has met in Trinidad and Tobago. The forum's main theme, 'Shifting Tides: Challenges and Opportunities', was explored throughout the day in three sessions as follows: Session 1: Global and Regional Challenges Session 2: Spillovers from Cuba Session 3: Policies to Address Derisking

Employee SPOTLIGHT

The Office of the Prime Minister wishes to congratulate Ms. Velva Goodman-Francois and Ms. Wendy Ann St. Bernard on their outstanding academic achievements. May you have continued success! To all members of staff who have embarked on self-improvement journeys, academic or otherwise, we wish you the very best and look forward to witnessing the fruits of your labour.



Ms. Velva Goodman-Francois Receptionist/Telephone Operator Occupational Safety and Health (BSc.) Magna Cum Laude Academic Award of Merit for the highest performance (2016) College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (CoSTATT)

Photo courtesy: CoSTATT

Ms. Wendy Ann St. Bernard
Temp. Clerk Typist I – Pension & Leave Unit Bachelor of Science in Management Studies with Second Class Honours (Upper Division) University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine

Photo courtesy: Ms. Wendy Ann St. Bernard



Prime Minister's Engagements



Prime Minister Rowley greets attendees at the Divali Nagar.

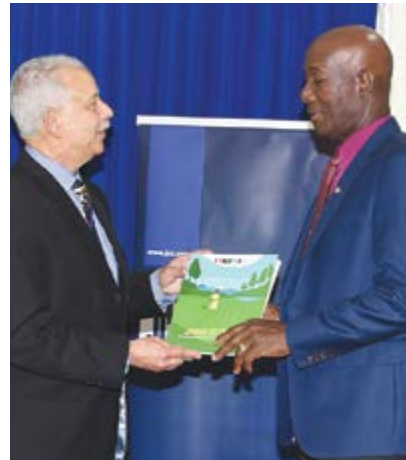


Prime Minister Rowley received a courtesy call today (Friday 2nd December, 2016) from representatives of the Ferrostaal Group at the Office of the Prime Minister, St. Clair, Port of Spain. Present were (from left to right) Professor Kenny Julien, Dr. Klaus Lesker - Ferrostaal, Executive Board Member, Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley, Ferrostaal Senior Executive Manager - Urs Vollrath, MPC Capital Managing Director - D Collins Roth and MPC Capital Managing Director - Robert Jividen.



Prime Minister Dr. Rowley greets Mr. Ian E. Welch - Managing Director, PCS Nitrogen Trinidad during a courtesy call from representatives of PCS Nitrogen and PotashCorp (Tuesday 13th December, 2016) at the Diplomatic Centre, St. Ann's.

Dr. Rowley receives a report after delivering the opening address at a Seminar on Housing, Building, Construction and Land Use In a Challenging Economy hosted by Joint Consultative Council for the Construction Industry today (Wednesday 23rd November, 2016) at the Radisson Hotel.



Dr. Rowley lays a wreath during the National Day of Remembrance 2016 (Sunday 13th November) in honour of all who served and in memory of those who fell in World Wars I and II 1914-1918 & 1939-1945.



Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley presents Ms. Lillyann Williams with tokens of appreciation.



Swearing-in ceremony of new Senators: (From left to right) His Excellency Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona, SC, ORTT, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Senator Karim Hosein, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, and Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.



Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Dr. Keith Rowley, signs the condolence book in honour of Fidel Castro, former President of Cuba, at the Cuban Embassy while Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Guillermo Vazquez Moreno looks on today (Friday 2nd December, 2016).

PUTTING INFRASTRUCTURE TO WORK

"Whoever you are, if you don't have personal safety, nothing else matters."

- Prime Minister Dr. Rowley



Prime Minister Rowley reveals the commemoration plaques at the newly constructed police stations at Besson Street (above) and St. Joseph (below).



Without a doubt, national security remains a top priority of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. As the leading agency in the fight against crime, it is essential that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) is well equipped to tackle their mandate head-on. However, with the advent of improvements and increases in available resources, Prime Minister Rowley has reiterated that it remains the responsibility of the TTPS to make the best of what has been provided.

Speaking at recent handover ceremonies for the newly constructed police stations in St. Joseph and Besson Street, Dr. Rowley reminded police officers to construct more positive relationships with the communities they are tasked to protect and serve.

Dr Rowley affirmed, "Policing is not an easy job but it is a job that has to be done... it must be done against the background that citizens see officers as part of their quality of life. I appeal to the police officers: walk the streets, give them that human contact, let them know that you are on the same side. The one thing that would guarantee failure in a community like this is if the community feels that the police is an enemy, that the uniform is a symbol of oppression. Meet with those whom you police and try to remove that sentiment that the police is against the community. Let it not be said that those we rely on failed us for poor management, poor attitudes etc."

OPM CELEBRATES Christmas 2016!



Members of staff of the OPM during an afternoon of merriment at the office's Christmas luncheon at the Diplomatic Centre, St. Ann's, Port of Spain.



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National Leaders –

Former Prime Minister and President of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson SC, OCC, TC and the Honourable Patrick Manning, former Prime Minister, during meetings with His Excellency Fidel Castro, former President of Cuba.

Also present is the Hon. Gordon Draper, Former Minister of Information.

