



# MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

## Corporate Communication Unit

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## PUBLIC STATEMENT

October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### **COASTAL PROTECTION UNIT OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT ADVISES EXTREME CAUTION FOLLOWING RECENT LONG PERIOD SWELLS**

The Coastal Protection Unit (CPU) of the Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) supports a safe environment for those who enjoy the amenities of the coast, and wishes to advise the public of the importance of following advisories from the Office of Disaster and Preparedness and Management (ODPM) and other National agencies for sea bathers and fisher folk to exercise extreme caution when venturing into or near rough seas.

The recent long period swells generated by a disturbance in the Northern Atlantic Ocean have been affecting the coastlines of both Trinidad and Tobago. These swell conditions have led to unusually high energy waves especially along the North coast of Trinidad, as well as the sheltered coastlines of Tobago.

The coastline is the first line of defence to natural disturbances generated in the ocean, particularly during the hurricane season. Natural disturbances can cause unusually high swells and storm surges which may breach coastal infrastructure and cause damage to buildings, personal property including fishing vessels, agricultural land holdings, and roads.

Trinidad and Tobago's coastlines are an important yet undervalued asset to human society. It has many functions which individuals and the nation as a whole depend on for their livelihoods. The country's economy has traditionally been supported by coastal and marine resources, including oil, gas, tourism and fisheries. Approximately 80% of socio-economic activities and 70% of human population lives on the coast of Trinidad and Tobago. Various beaches along the coast are also a popular recreational site for locals and tourists.

The Ministry of Works and Transport is committed to delivering a sustainable coastal management strategy - reducing vulnerabilities, optimizing social and economic opportunities and sustaining environmental integrity.

Members of the public can contact the Coastal Protection Unit at 623-6797 or via email at [coastal@mowt.gov.tt](mailto:coastal@mowt.gov.tt). Share your videos of coastal erosion, coastal flooding and other interesting occurrences observed around our coast with MOWT by emailing to [communications@mowt.gov.tt](mailto:communications@mowt.gov.tt) or by posting to our Facebook page.

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