



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT
Senator The Honourable Rohan Sinanan

Senator the Honourable Rohan Sinanan, Minister of Works and Transport responds to the Trinidad Express Newspaper Editorial "Transportation Deja vu".

As Minister of Works and Transport, I read with dismay, appall, and if I am entirely frank, was left with some distress over the article "Transportation Deja vu" published in the Trinidad Express Newspaper dated Saturday 02, April 2022. If printed on April 01, I would have taken it as an "April Fool's" joke/prank and laughed it off. However, given its publication date, April 02 I was unable to take that route since there is a need to correct several inaccuracies and misquotes on the part of the individual who penned the article. Firstly, I would like to clarify that the Ministry of Works and Transport is very much aware of the document referenced in the article-The National Internal Transportation Policy for Trinidad. This document was built upon a 1988 document and started as follows: "In April 1996, the Honourable Minister of Works and Transport appointed a committee to review and amend as necessary the National Internal Transportation Policy for Trinidad and Tobago dated April 26, 1988."

It served as an internal planning document, one of many, that the Ministry of Works and Transport utilises in conjunction with other documents. Other documents include previous studies undertaken by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which addressed a National Highways Programme and National Maintenance Programme. The Ministry is cognizant of ALL previous studies undertaken, inclusive of the "1995-1996 National Internal Transportation Policy", as well as subsequent transportation studies. Accordingly, usable and implementable portions of these studies, within the context of the national economic landscape, among other factors, have been initiated. However, the Ministry has always been clear on its intention to commission a Comprehensive National Transportation Master Plan, which encompasses all forms of Transport to provide a coordinated approach to land, sea and air transport.

As a responsible Ministry, it is incumbent upon us to update these "dated" plans, which are in excess of 20 years old, to ensure that appropriate and relevant strategies are proposed for the future of Trinidad and Tobago. We have been pursuing this exercise for quite some time. Once again, we are on the cusp of initiating the tendering process for the procurement of consultants to develop the plan. However, the preponderance of uninformed articles of this nature, which lack substantial research, only seek to cast doubt and dismay in the minds of citizens. The question one must ask is, "Why"? What is the intent, purpose or dare I ask, rationale behind this exercise?

I now turn my attention to the inaccuracies and misunderstandings documented in the article "Transportation Deja vu". At a recent exercise, I referred to an Internal Road Assessment Project. This initiative is being pursued with the assistance of the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Caribbean Development Bank and is to be undertaken by a registered charity dedicated to saving lives by eliminating high-risk roads throughout the world. Road Assessment Programmes (iRAP) are now active in more than 100 countries throughout Europe, Asia Pacific, North, Central and South America and Africa. iRAP works in partnership with Governments, road authorities, mobility clubs, development banks, NGOs and research organisations to:



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- Inspect high-risk roads and develop Star Ratings, Risk Maps and Safer Roads Investment Plans
- Provide training, technology and support that will build and sustain national, regional and local capability; and
- Track road safety performance so that funding agencies can assess the benefits of their investments.

I spoke to this initiative at the distribution of letters of appointment to the newly reconstituted Trinidad and Tobago National Road Safety Council, given the nature of the project and its direct connection to the implementation of road safety initiatives to which the Ministry is closely aligned. As Minister of Works and Transport, I wish to assure the public that the Ministry is thoroughly aware of all previous studies and works undertaken. All historical and current documents, as well as the lessons learnt, continue to inform and guide our actions in fulfilling our mandate to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

The unfounded statements regarding the shoving aside of previous efforts speak to a lack of knowledge of the efforts currently being undertaken by the Ministry, and the plethora of projects that are underway based on the output of said plans. To date, several projects are being undertaken to link rural communities inclusive of:

- **Construction of the Moruga Highway**
- **Construction of the Valencia to Toco Highway**
- **Construction of the Solomon Hochoy Highway Extension to Point Fortin**
- **Construction of the Churchill Roosevelt Highway Extension to Sangre Grande**
- **A Bridges Reconstruction Programme**
- **A Landslip Repair Programme**
- **Two new Ports and a Marina in Tobago**
- **A new Airport Terminal in Tobago**

My pronouncements are not “virginal” in nature. Guided by the team of technical experts at the Ministry, collectively, we have considered the pertinent issues and what has gone before. This Government is willing to deal with the “problem” and is taking the necessary action by developing a Comprehensive National Transportation Master Plan for Trinidad and Tobago, which will, among other things, seek to reconcile all current transportation activities and guide investment in the transportation sector in the short, medium and long term. The intent is to build up, not tear down! As a Ministry, we are willing to listen and collaborate, but we will not be mired by the negative, empty bellows of naysayers who want to hold on to the past while ignoring the future and the need to put systems in place for the next generation.

Rohan Sinanan
Minister of Works and Transport