



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

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May 28<sup>th</sup> 2021

**Minister of Works and Transport Responds to**  
**Member of Parliament for Oropouche West, Mr Davendranath Tancoo**

In my capacity as Minister of Works and Transport, I wish to respond to a social media post made by Oropouche West MP, Mr Davendranath Tancoo, directed at residents of that area. His rant focuses on the threat of flooding and calls on them to "demand attention" for drainage work to begin on the floodgates of Tulsa Trace, Woodland and Central Trace in Fyzabad-areas he claims have been neglected for years.

I take this opportunity to convey to the public that the claims of MP Tancoo are both false and malicious in nature.

The truth is that the Ministry of Works and Transport's Drainage Division, under the Development Programme, embarked on an initiative entitled "*The Upgrade to Existing Pumps and Gates Inventory*" in January 2019. The Programme involves the upgrade of pump stations and the replacement and/or rehabilitation of sluice gates and flap gates across Trinidad.

These are the project details for the three areas identified within the Oropouche Lagoon area:

- Tulsa Trace, Penal
- St. John's Trace, Fyzabad
- Trinidad Point, Woodland

The current status of the projects is as follows:

At the **Tulsa Trace Pump Site**, works commenced on the upgrade of the Tulsa Trace Pump House and Gates in October 2019. The scope of work includes installing one (1) new 30,000 GPM pump, as well as installing two (2) new sluice gates and a trash rack.

So far, the pump has been manufactured and is awaiting shipment to Trinidad from the foreign supplier. The two (2) sluice gates have been imported and are currently at the site, one has been installed and the other is in the process of installation. Works are ongoing and are 60% completed. Upon delivery of the pump, it will be completed in August of this year. The project had been delayed due to shipping issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **St. John's Trace, Avocat Gate Site** has undergone works that commenced on the upgrade of the St. John's Gate Site in January 2020. Seven (7) sluice gates were refurbished and motorized as part of the project. The electrical supply to this site was upgraded to fully motorize the gates. Works are 99% completed. All seven (7) gates are fully operational.

Testing and commissioning are currently being done prior to handover. This project was delayed due to multiple issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At **Trinidad Point (Woodland) Gate Site**, works commenced on the upgrade of the Trinidad Point Gate Site in July 2020. The scope of works includes the refurbishment of fourteen (14) sluice gates and motorization of ten (10) out of the fourteen (14) sluice gates. The electrical supply has been upgraded. Works are ongoing and are 50% completed. The project was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the Upgrade to Existing Pumps and Gates Inventory Programme, the Drainage Division, under its Desilting Works Programme for fiscal 2020-2021, has scheduled ten (10) projects in the electoral districts of Oropouche West, Oropouche East, Fyzabad and Siparia all of which are adjacent to each other and would bring relief to the residents of the Oropouche Lagoon and environs.

To date, four (4) have already been completed inclusive of clearing and desilting of:

- 3,000 metres downstream from Pluck Road Woodland to Trinidad Point floodgate in Oropouche West
- 4,000 metres upstream and downstream of Bunsee Trace, Debe Trace in Oropouche West
- 1,500 metres upstream of S.S Erin Road, near Quinam Road in Siparia
- 4,400 metres downstream of Goodman Trace, Penal Rock Road in Siparia

Additionally, six (6) projects are at various stages of completion, which include the clearing and desilting of the following:

- 2,000 metres upstream of Tulsa Trace Branch Trace in Oropouche West
- 1,000 metres downstream of S. S Erin Road, Penal in Oropouche West
- 3,000 metres upstream and downstream of S.S Erin Road in Oropouche East
- The retention pond between M2 Ring Road Debe and Wellington Road, Debe in Oropouche East
- 3,000 metres upstream of Delhi Road, Fyzabad
- 2,000 meters Downstream Gowers Well Road, Fyzabad

Furthermore, in response to the flood events of 2019, the Division strategically completed works in the Oropouche Lagoon area in 2020 to mitigate the potential for flooding. These works included:

- Repair to the embankment of the New Cut Channel - upstream of Pluck Road Woodland
- Repair to the left embankment of the New Cut Channel – downstream of Pluck Road.
- Construction of embankment of the Coromata River which is a tributary to the Oropouche River and;
- Repair to the right embankment of the Coora River.

In light of this detailed report, Oropouche West MP Mr Davendranath Tancoo has no right making claims of “inaction” on the part of the Ministry of Works and Transport where the subject of drainage is concerned. Instead he sits in his office making videos claiming that I have failed to respond to his requests for information.

However, I recall entering a sitting of the House on April 9, 2021. I was prepared to respond to him in detail but the Opposition Benches were empty. In yet another display of irresponsibility, he failed to show up on this critical occasion that directly affected the residents of his constituency. On the subject of the questions to be answered, the Deputy Speaker ultimately stated that given the absence of Members, the questions on the Order Paper lapsed.

While I cannot dictate to Mr. Tancoo how to conduct himself in his office as Member of Parliament, I would advise him to take into account that Trinidad and Tobago is facing an unprecedented national crisis. As he recklessly fans the flames of chaos with untruths and the foreboding threat of loss through flooding, COVID-19 continues to pose a biological threat to all of us. Perhaps his time, influence and other resources can be better spent offering more leadership and reassurance to his constituents during this difficult time as more families deal with the death of loved ones and the loss of wages.

Moving forward, the Ministry of Works and Transport will continue to accelerate its national strategy to deal with flooding and drainage even as we navigate these challenging financial times. In spite of any restrictions, the Drainage Division will especially target areas that are highly prone to flooding disasters as we work to respond to the management of Trinidad’s watercourses in an era of global warming, sea level rise, and the threat of increasingly volatile weather conditions.

I remain the people’s humble servant,

**Rohan Sinanan**  
**Minister of Works and Transport**