

SPEAKING NOTES
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MINISTRY OF HEALTH
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TOURISM AND HEALTH
STAKEHOLDER MEETING ANF TRAINING
WORKSHOP
KAPOJK HOTEL
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SALUTATIONS

- **Mr. Richard Madray, Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Tourism**
- **Dr. Lisa Indar, Head, Tourism and Health
Programme and Food-borne Diseases,
Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)**
- **Mr. Brian Frontin, Chief Executive Officer,
Trinidad and Tobago Hotels, Restaurants and
Tourism Association (THRTA)**

- **Dr. Harry Smith, Principal Medical Officer,
Epidemiology, Ministry of Health**
- **Dr. Ayanna Alexander, Epidemiologist,
CARPHA**
- **Dr. Yoel Padrom Medical Epidemiologist,
Ministry of Health**

Good Morning,

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen I am pleased to stand before you this morning as we work to further strengthen Trinidad and Tobago's response capacity to public health threats within the realm of tourism that go beyond national boundaries. The Tourism and Health Programme will undoubtedly lead to improvements in health, safety and security of locals and visitors alike; tourism resilience; reputation and economic sustainability.

I believe this collaboration, among the Ministries and agencies involved, has put Trinidad and Tobago in an excellent position to ensure improvements in our capacity to provide cost effective and quality health, food safety and environmental sanitation solutions to threats affecting sustainable tourism locally.

Ministry Collaboration

Esteemed colleagues, over two years ago the Ministries of Health and Tourism committed to the establishment of the Tourism and Health Programme with the aim of strengthening the capacity to monitor and respond to tourism based public health events in Trinidad and Tobago.

- The Ministry of Health remains committed to the establishment and implementation of this programme, as we work together towards strengthening our Public Health Surveillance and Response (PS&R), so as to promote adequate disease prevention and control, and thereby improve the health of citizens and visitors to Trinidad and Tobago.
- Tourism is vulnerable to health, safety and environmental sanitation threats, as with disease outbreaks/ crises, there are negative impacts to the tourism product.
- This integrated multi- sectoral programme is the first of its kind and sets an international precedent for improving sustainable tourism. Working together with the Ministry of Tourism gives us an ample opportunity to streamline the responses in the face of any untoward situation.
- Through the implementation of the THP, there will be real time web based, health information, monitoring and early alert response systems. This would allow for early, real time detection and response to public health issues so as to avoid the spread and consequential negative publicity and reputational damage, undoubtedly promoting a healthier safer tourism destination.

Regional Implications

The origin of this programme lies in the region's dependence on tourism and the impact negative health related issues would have on the tourism industry and consequently the Region's economies.

- Ladies and gentlemen, the partnership with the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in this regard, does not only have significance for Trinidad and Tobago, as with the implementation of the THP, this country has also endorsed the THP's Regional guidelines and Regional policies. This will lead to a science based, harmonised regional approach and response to public health tourism based illnesses.
- Training and certification in advanced food safety and environmental sanitation constitutes a significant part of this step in the right direction. It should be noted that over 75 percent of the illness outbreaks among visitors are diarrheal and linked to consumption of contaminated food and water. Improving food safety is therefore a key area for ensuring a safer, healthier tourism product. This will undoubtedly lead to the building of capacity and allow for international certification. Caribbean-wide Health, Safety and Environmental tourism standards with certification ensure that Trinidad and Tobago is meeting regional and

international quality standards of performance that will promote a healthier, safer population.

I take this opportunity to extend heartfelt gratitude to all the multi-sectoral partner agencies that have been influential in the creation and implementation of this programme. I look forward to key next steps that will lead to further improvements in the policy.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Health remains fully supportive of this initiative and the enforcement of the Public Health Act before the end of 2018 as we continue to work towards a Healthy Me, healthy You Healthy Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you.