



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Jetsam Awards Ceremony 2016

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ADDRESS BY

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE-SCOON
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

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15 FEBRUARY, 2017

It is a pleasure to join you today and to share a few words at this year's Jetsam Awards Ceremony to honour the seminal achievers of the annual horseracing season in Trinidad and Tobago. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you all.

The hosting of the 2016 edition of the Ceremony acknowledges the standards of excellence which have been attained by the various champions. I am sure that there is a renewed determination to find themselves in winner's row.

Ladies and gentlemen, this annual event, held since 1983 I am told, also affords us an opportunity to reflect on the progress made, as well as current challenges and opportunities for advancement. The sector contributes to the economic landscape of Trinidad and Tobago employing, directly and indirectly, a significant number of persons. These include trainers and assistant trainers; grooms; farriers; stable lads; jockeys and apprentice jockeys; veterinarians; security personnel and administrative staff. It brings enjoyment to many.

In order to ensure the industry's sustainability however, it is imperative that we encourage competitive, clean racing but more than ever, improved local horse racing facilities. This is vital to attracting spectators and actual participants, as well as generating additional revenue. In this regard, I am confident that the collaborative effort required to improve the standard of horse racing locally will yield tangible results.

Government is cognizant of the economic challenges which the industry is encountering. In this vein, we are committed to the enactment of the Gambling (Gaming and Betting Control) Bill which will ensure that there is a modern legal and regulatory framework for gaming, gambling and betting; but, there is much more to be done by you.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry, while focused on attracting investments, improving the country's competitiveness and diversifying export markets, also has its mandate to develop the horse racing industry through its entities, the Betting Levy Board and the Trinidad and Tobago Racing Authority.

The current economic climate constricts the Government's ability to make cash injections. The development in the industry however needs more than direct financial support. It is well noted on any balance sheet, that the industry is healthy, owning valuable property. Those who love the sport and are committed enough are added to those who hold responsibility, meaning the Boards of the TTRA and BLB must take horse racing seriously if the industry is to be sustained and grow.

I am trusting that the racing fraternity will not relinquish the objective of developing Trinidad and Tobago as the horse racing centre of the Caribbean but what certainly must not go unnoticed, are the proposed plans, which are already in the public domain, for further development within other parts of the region. "If you're caught napping, the fact is you'll be left behind". There are far too many great minds here, to allow us to fall to such a position.

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, I wish to assure you that the Ministry of Trade and Industry stands ready to support the industry's efforts to further advance racing in Trinidad and Tobago but again, serious effort must come from the stakeholders and those who invest in the pleasurable sport of horse racing.

Again, my warm congratulations to all the winners this evening.

I thank you.