



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister Gopee-Scoon to STEEP graduates: ‘make the most of opportunities offered through Gov’t programmes’

October 16, 2024: Wednesday (October 16), marked a special day for 430 students who graduated from the MIC-Institute of Technology’s Student Enhancement and Empowerment Programme (STEEP). Delivering the Feature Address at the commencement ceremony at the National Academy for the Performing Arts in Port of Spain, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon described the programme as “a transformative course, serving as a career-pathing tool that provides an introduction to some of the necessary life skills required to succeed in the world of work.”

The Minister, who spoke on behalf of The Honourable Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Christopher Rowley, noted that the nation’s youth are the ones who will in the future transform Trinidad and Tobago through innovation, creativity and passion. For this reason, the Government continues to prioritize the development and implementation of programmes that build the skills of young people across a wide cross section of sectors.

Referencing Government’s investments in free-education and apprenticeship programmes with stipends, Gopee-Scoon said, “we continue to fund and implement the right policies and programmes so you, our young persons, will be prepared for the world of work; becoming the problem-solvers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and change agents of the future.”

The creation of the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS), a vision of the Hon. Prime Minister, is another important example of Government’s focus and commitment to youth development. MYDNS programmes continue to build the capacity of young individuals in society and enhance their employability through several transformative programmes such as the Civilian Conservation Corps / CCC; Military-led Academic Training Programme /MiLAT, Military-led Programme of Apprenticeship and Reorientation Training /MYPART, Youth Apprenticeship Homestead Programme and the Youth Agricultural Shade House Project.

The Minister also shared on youth-focused initiatives under the Ministry of Trade and Industry, including the Apprenticeship Programmes in targeted sectors such as

Manufacturing, Woodworking and Yachting as well as a soon-to-be introduced Steelpan Tuners Apprenticeship Programme.

Notably, the 2024-2025 Budget presentation has also earmarked several new youth-oriented programmes: The Ministry of Education's Online Numeracy Programme for Adults, the National Digital Literacy Project, a Digital Literacy Certification Programme and an After School CSEC Mathematics Tuition Project.

However, the success of such initiatives also depend on personal responsibility, the Minister explained. "You also have a role to play in your own development and it is your personal responsibility to make the most out of these opportunities. I am particularly pleased to hear that some of you have already expressed interest in enrolling in the available TVET and apprenticeship programmes. It is these continued investments which will yield long term benefits and contribute to your success."

In closing, the Minister congratulated the graduates and encouraged them to believe in themselves, find purpose, be persistent and resilient, embrace change and forge supportive connections as they embark on their futures.

Also bringing Remarks at the event were Mrs. Ayanna Gaspard-Clarke, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, who spoke on behalf of Education Minister Dr the Hon. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, and Professor Clément Imbert, ORTT – Chairman of the MIC Institute of Technology.

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