



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

Remarks by

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**Global Entrepreneurship Week 2025**

***“Together we Build”***

hosted by the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business  
Alumni Association

Wednesday, November 19th, 2025

It is a tremendous honour to be with you this evening for the launch of Global Entrepreneurship Week 2025, right here at the UWI Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business—a place that continues to shape the minds and missions of our region's most dynamic leaders.

I'm especially grateful for the warm hospitality and for the opportunity to share and autograph copies of my memoir, *Building a World-Class Brand on a Shoestring Budget*, with members of your alumni community. Thank you for that privilege.

This year's theme—"Together We Build"—highlights the power of collaboration and community in driving entrepreneurial success and economic growth. At the heart of this theme is tonight's panel discussion on *Building an Ecosystem for Startups* and I know the esteemed panel is ready to share their journeys and practical insights into the secret ingredients required to build and sustain a start-up. As we embrace this year's theme I'd like to offer a few reflections that I hope will enrich your panel discussion.

### The Trinbagonian Spirit of Enterprise

Our twin-island Republic has long been home to some of the world's brightest minds, boldest thinkers and most daring entrepreneurs. We are a people of passion, creativity and joy—and time and again, we prove ourselves to be game-changers.

Entrepreneurship, therefore, is more than just business for us; it is a way of thinking and a way of contributing. It is about solving real problems, thinking critically and transforming passion into purpose.

When I founded Sacha Cosmetics over four decades ago, I had no idea where the journey would lead. But I knew one thing: when I saw the way our products transformed the skin tone and confidence of Caribbean women, I became resolute. I would take this business as far and as wide as the universe would allow.

Were there mistakes? Absolutely.

Did I fall and get back up? Countless times.

Were there moments of doubt? Without question.

But through it all, I held fast to one unwavering belief: Women of colour deserved better.

Looking back, Sacha Cosmetics—a Trinbago-born, globally accomplished brand—I have gathered some valuable lessons.

Today, my role has evolved. I no longer build solely for myself or my company. I build for the next generation. I mentor new businesses because I know first-hand how powerful one word of guidance can be.

And that is why this theme—Together We Build—is so meaningful. Because entrepreneurship is not a competition. It is a relay. We pass the baton. We lift as we climb. We create the conditions that make it easier for others to succeed. Especially now in my post as Minister, improving the ease of doing business is a top priority.

And it is our responsibility—those of us who have succeeded, those of us who have walked the hard road—to expand access to opportunity for those coming behind us.

That's how countries rise

That's how industries are evolve

That's how great companies are born

Three takeaways/powerful truths for Entrepreneurs

To every entrepreneur here tonight—whether you are sketching your first idea on paper or leading a company ready to scale—I want you to hold on to three powerful truths:

Your vision matters.

When I founded Sacha Cosmetics over four decades ago, my vision was simple but bold: to create beauty products that truly celebrated women of colour. At the time, many said it couldn't be done in Trinidad and Tobago, that the market was too small, that global brands were unbeatable. But I believed in the vision. I believed that Caribbean women deserved products that understood their skin, their tones and their needs. That belief became my North Star. It guided every decision, every late night, every challenge we faced. Without a clear, unwavering vision, Sacha would never have grown from a small local brand to a Trinbago-born, globally recognized company.

## Build Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration

As we speak about building an ecosystem - let us not underestimate the value of building strategic partnerships and collaboration. Yes, ideas may be born in isolation—but they only grow through community, connection and support. Every successful venture I've built or led has stood on the shoulders of networks, mentors, collaborators and partners who were willing to share knowledge and take chances alongside me.

This evening, you are surrounded by people who have walked this journey, people who have struggled and succeeded, people who have something meaningful to offer. Reach out. Ask questions. Make connections. Build relationships.

No business—and no nation—can transform alone.

## Embrace Technology

When I began my first business, access to markets, technology and resources was nothing like what we see today. Now, the world is open. A start-up in Port of Spain can sell to customers in Dubai, Hong Kong, or Toronto with the tap of a screen. Never before has it been so accessible to start something—whether it's a digital platform, a manufacturing concept, a creative venture, or a socially-driven business. Technology has levelled the playing field, global markets are within reach and talent can emerge from anywhere.

Before I close, I wish to leave you with a few final thoughts which I urge you to share with your teams and clients and which are contained in my teaching memoir, *Building a World-Class Brand on a Shoestring Budget*, against all odds.

It is this background and experience that I bring to bear on my position as Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism:

- Quality
- Value not price
- Change the world
- Legacy
- Differentiate – sustainable
- Best place to be in business – hurricane belt, eg. Skin tones
- Flagship product - extend
- Mc Kinsey
- Miss universe, usa, halal,

- Monte carlo

Closing: Seize the Moment

So I say to you, the alumni and future builders of our economy:

Seize the moment. Embrace the opportunity. And if the opportunity isn't clear—Re-Focus. Re-Think. Renew your resolve.

Futurist Alvin Toffler – the illiterate of the 21st century

As we move into tonight's panel discussion, I encourage all of you to listen not just for inspiration, but for alignment—look for the ideas, partnerships and insights that can fuel your next step forward.

Because together, we are shaping the start-up ecosystem that Trinidad and Tobago deserves.

Thank you once again to the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business and its alumni for this opportunity to share my journey. I hope my memoir serves as a living reference of grit, purpose and possibility—especially for those of you who know, deep in your spirit that greatness awaits.

May your discussions tonight—and the ventures they inspire—benefit us all as we build our great nation, Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you and may your dreams become legacies.