



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

“HADCO Experiences at Asa Wright Nature Centre Green Key Certification Ceremony”

Remarks by

Senator the Honourable Satyakama Maharaj

Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism

Friday 9th January, 2026

Salutations

- Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism – Dr. Colin Neil Gosine
- Permanent Secretary – Ms. Abigail Bynoe
- Deputy Permanent Secretary – Mrs. Ava Mahabir-Dass
- Group co-Chief Executive Officer, HADCO Group – Mr. John Hadad
- Director, Green T&T – Mr. Willard P. Harris
- Interim Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Trinidad Limited - Mr. Ian Downes
- Heads of Divisions and their Team Members of the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism and Tourism Trinidad Limited
- Valued Members of Our Tourism Community
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

It is a pleasure to join you for today's Green Key Award Ceremony. This recognition is not only a proud moment for HADCO Experiences and the Asa Wright Nature Centre—it is a proud moment for Trinidad and Tobago. It signals our shared commitment to protecting our natural heritage while elevating the quality and sustainability of our tourism product.

The Asa Wright Nature Centre, founded in 1967 by Mrs. Asa Wright, remains one of the world's most treasured biodiversity hotspots. Its trails, waterfalls, and research facilities offer visitors an intimate encounter with hummingbirds, jacobins, honeycreepers, tufted coquettes, oilbirds, the sensitive ocelot, and countless other species. It is a place where conservation, education, and ecotourism come together in a uniquely Trinidad and Tobago experience.

The Green Key Award represents the highest global standard for environmental responsibility in tourism.

With more than 8,000 certified establishments across over 90 countries, this eco-label is awarded only to those who meet strict criteria in environmental management, water and energy efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable food and beverage practices,

indoor environmental quality, and community engagement. It is a powerful assurance to guests that their stay supports a healthier planet.

HADCO Experiences has embraced this responsibility wholeheartedly. Since receiving the concession to operate the ecolodge, they have revitalised the Centre with solar energy systems, water conservation measures, waste sorting and recycling, a zero-plastics policy, eco-friendly cleaning products, and the use of nature-based construction materials. They have also strengthened linkages with local farmers and created meaningful employment for residents of surrounding communities.

These efforts reflect the very best of what sustainable tourism can be—responsible, community-oriented, and deeply respectful of the environment.

They also align with this Government's commitment to supporting private sector partners who are advancing low-carbon, high-quality tourism experiences.

The ecolodge now employs forty-four people and supports a wide network of farmers, tradespeople, transport providers, and service professionals. This is the kind of economic and environmental synergy we want to encourage across the sector.

I also wish to acknowledge the invaluable guidance provided by Green T&T—the national operator of the Green Key Programme. Their thorough audits and unwavering standards ensured that the ecolodge met every requirement of this prestigious certification.

Green T&T, operating under the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), is part of a global network headquartered in Copenhagen, with over 110 member organisations across 85 countries.

Through programmes like Green Key and Blue Flag, FEE promotes sustainable business practices and the protection of natural resources. I say Well Done to all.

This international recognition positions Trinidad and Tobago to attract new tourism markets—particularly in the rapidly growing niche of birdwatching and nature-based travel.

Tourism remains one of the most powerful engines of economic diversification. It creates jobs, generates income, and brings vital foreign exchange.

Under this Government's leadership, we are rethinking and resetting the sector—defining our products, elevating their desirability, and strengthening partnerships with stakeholders to deliver world-class experiences.

As Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism, I remain committed to expanding the range of experiences that bring visitors to our shores and ensuring that Trinidad and Tobago continues to offer world-class, environmentally responsible tourism products.

In closing, I extend heartfelt congratulations to the HADCO Group and the dedicated team at HADCO Experiences on achieving Green Key Certification.

Your work strengthens our tourism industry, protects our natural assets, and demonstrates that Trinidad and Tobago is ready to lead in sustainable development.

The mantra I stated on becoming Minister is “Trinidad and Tobago is open for business”, and I am proud to champion that message alongside partners like you.

Trinidad and Tobago is the greatest place on earth!

Congratulations and may this Award serve as a best-in-class example for similar initiatives across our nation.

Thank you.