



## **Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts**

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2017**

**4:30pm**

### **Formal Opening Ceremony of Ackbar Trace Community Centre**

#### **Address**

**Presented by:**

**Dr. the Honourable Nyan Gadsby-Dolly  
Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts and  
Member of Parliament for St. Ann's East**

## **SALUTATIONS:**

- Member of Parliament – Fyzabad – Dr. Lackram Bode
- Mrs. Angela Edwards, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts
- Councillor Doodnath Mayrhoo for the Avocat/San Francique Area and other representative of the Siparia Regional Corporation
- Ms. Gwyneth Alexander, Deputy Director, Community Development Division, Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts
- Other members of staff of the Ministry
- Mr. Noel Garcia, Chairman of UdeCott and other member of board and staff of UdeCott
- Mr. Reynold Sewdass, Supervisor II, Victoria West District
- Mr. Michael Chattaroon, President, Ackbar Trace Community Council
- Ms. Gina Rajbir, Treasurer, Ackbar Trace Community Council and other members of the Village Council
- Residents of Ackbar Trace Community
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon

I am delighted to be here in this historic area of Ackbar Trace, and obviously a very talented area of Ackbar Trace, to celebrate this event which marks a new phase in this community.

Today, is a day where we celebrate. We celebrate not only the creation of a valuable new facility for all of the residents of this area, but also the great well-spring of community spirit which drove this important initiative to its successful and inspiring conclusion.

Just last week, at a sod-turning ceremony for the construction of another community centre in a different area, I spoke about the importance of having access to community centres; the importance of providing spaces for members of the community to gather, to learn and to teach.

From what I have heard and seen this evening, I know that this centre will really serve as a hub for community development in Ackbar Trace and environs.

We have just concluded the Prime Minister's Best Village Trophy Competition and I will like to congratulate Ackbar Trace and environs on the success of your group in this competition. If this could have been done without your centre being here, then next year, next season we look forward to lots more. I am seeing Indian dancing, young people singing and playing instruments. So, Ackbar Trace and MP, we are looking out for you next year in the 2018 season of the Prime Minister's Best Village Trophy Competition. I want to encourage you Village Council to keep encouraging your young people. If all over the country we do our best, both village council and other community groups that are present in the communities, if we do our

best to encourage our young people to follow in our footsteps and to give back to their communities in the way we are, then Trinidad and Tobago will be in a better place for generations to come.

The construction of this facility was completed through the Community Centres Construction and Refurbishment Programme of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts. The value of this building, however, goes well beyond its walls and doors. More than just a physical structure, it is a symbol of the commitment of your government to the implementation of programmes that rebuild our country, our economy and enhance the quality of life for all citizens.

Since 2015, we have opened 13 community centres and have commenced a series of sod-turnings because we know

that community centres contribute greatly to quality of life in any community. The one thing that is asked for most by all members of parliament are community centres; and it comes from the community reaching out to their representatives, for this most valuable community asset for which your member of parliament referred to it. We believe that these centres plays a pivotal role in building culturally rich and resilient communities and productive citizens.

This investment is therefore not just in the physical structure but in members of this community. The Ministry has invested approximately 8.6 million dollars in this centre. It was constructed by Building Solutions Limited and was managed by UdeCott on behalf of the Ministry's Community Development Division. This single-storey centre is fully-equipped with:

- an auditorium,

- a kitchen,
- a computer room,
- fully equipped changing rooms
- two additional rooms,
- an administrative office,
- an audio-visual and sound room, as well as the necessary facilities.

Let us acknowledge our gratitude for the work done on this state of the art centre.

To those who would have opened their homes to the community while the centre was being built, your passion and commitment to the spirit of community life is appreciated. To the persistence of the Village Council, the Community Development Officers and all other community members and representatives both past and present in ensuring, that this community has centre of its own, we

pay tribute. Everyone here today has played an indelible role in the journey of this community and its members.

As we entrust this community centre to you, the Village Council, we do so in the knowledge that you will take good care of this centre. Our expectation is that you will make full use of this community centre, make it available to all residents and use the spaces to host the various groups for their practice, their meetings, for classes and whatever your community needs are in Ackbar Trace.

I want to join with the MP as well in saying that every group that uses it and the group that has responsibility for it, we hope and expect and from what I heard and seen you do that you will treat this centre with the respect that it deserves and ensure that many years from now, that those who come after you will have full use of this centre



in as much as possible in the state in which it was given to you. Once properly managed, this Community Centre can be the foundation for the development of the future leaders of Fyzabad; and more young people who performed for us here today and we want to hope, that when they are in position of leadership such as those who are there now, that this centre will be available for their use. We will be partnering with you at the Ministry to ensure that this does happen.

The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts pledges its support for you, we know that this is just a start and we are willing to stand by your side and support you, as you the community of Ackbar Trace work towards the development of your community and maximizing your potential.

To all the community-pillars in the audience today; to those who donated the land for the community centre I thank you for your vision, passion, dedication and tenacity.

To UdeCOTT for your dedicated effort, night and day to ensure that this centre was delivered, many thanks goes out to you. To the staff of the Community Development Division over the years who would have advocated and who would have encouraged the community to those things even though the centre was not yet finished we thank you and I want you to know ministry staff your efforts within the communities does not go unnoticed, we appreciate you. To everyone who was involve here, we thank you for your efforts, we thank you for your patience and we look forward to what this centre will bring to community development in Ackbar Trace.

God bless you.

Thank you.