



ADDRESS BY

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE

HAZEL MANNING

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

At the

FORMAL HANDING-OVER CEREMONY

of the

Valsayn Government Early Childhood

Care and Education Centre

Corner BJ Robinson Circular Road

and Old Southern Main Road, Valsayn

Friday 14th September, 2007
2.00 p.m.

- Ms. Deborah Boucard-Mason, Master of Ceremonies
- His Excellency, Mr. Jerry Narace – Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary at Large
- Dr. Sharon Ann Gopaul McNicol, Coordinator for St. Joseph
- Councillor Patricia Mejias, Chair, Tunapuna-Piarco Regional Corporation
- Mrs. Angella Jack, Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretaries Mrs. Marlene Juman-Redhead and Mrs. Marlene Felix and other hard-working representatives of the Ministry of Education
- Mrs Alison Lewis, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance

- Mr. Anthony Bartholomew, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning & Development
- Councillor Khadjah Ameen-Rostant, Representative for Valsayn South-Caparo
- Mr. Lennox Sirjuesingh, Director Mrs, Kathleen Thomas, Chief Executive Officer and other officials of the Education Facilities Company Limited
- Mr. Wayne Ramdin, Managing Director, Bowain Contracting Limited
- Reverend Cyril Paul, Representative of the Inter-Religious Organisation
- Mr. Clyde Permell, President of TTUTA
- Mrs Zena Ramatali, President of the National Parent-Teacher Association
- Mr. Ashram Boodram, Community Representative
- Other specially invited guests, members of the News Media, distinguished ladies and gentlemen and our special guests the students.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here today in this community of Spring Village. Labourers in the then sugar estates established this as a residential community. Tate and Lyle sugar manufacturing company acquired these lands in the 1930s and by the 1940's, history tells us, most of the residents had acquired parcels of land at approximately \$40 per lot.

Today Spring Village, with a population of fewer than 3,000 lies in the heart of a booming housing and service centre district and on the outskirts of the UTT Valsayn Teacher College.

Today, as we assemble across from the UTT Valsayn Teacher College Campus, it is an honour to receive the keys and to unveil a plaque at the handing-over ceremony of this Government Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centre. This Valsayn Early Childhood Care and Education Centre is the eight such Centre I have had the pleasure to receive from the Education Facilities Company Limited since April 2007.

- **In April** the EFCL handed over the La Romaine Government Early Childhood Care and Education Centre.
- **In May** it was the St. Augustine South ECCE Centre
- **In June** the El Socorro South and San Pedro Government ECCE Centres
- **In July** the Sangre Grande Government ECCE Centre and **in August**, two weeks ago, we received the keys to the La Puerta Government ECCE.

Ladies and gentlemen, this Valsayn Government ECCE Centre was built at a cost of \$1,583,109.80 by Bowain Contracting Limited. Construction works began on the 26th July, 2006 Very soon we will see the construction of new ECCE Centres at Caroni Village, La Paille, Madras, Munroe Road, Rhagnunanan Road and Edinburgh 500 in Chaguanas. Work will also

begin at the incomplete structure belonging to the Child Welfare League at Darling Street Chaguanas.

Ladies and Gentlemen: as we celebrate the handover of another ECCE we look forward to the establishment of another forty nine centres by the Education Facilities Company Limited which is assigned to construct these centres using the new architectural designs. The goal, as I have said time and again, is to construct 600 ECCE Centres across the nation by 2010. Some of these Centres will be constructed with the support of Non-Governmental Organisations.

I take this opportunity to extend congratulations to all persons and agencies associated with this construction project.

I wish you will all join with me in applauding the team of the Education Facilities Company Limited which in its two short years has established itself as an organization committed to the success of education in Trinidad and Tobago,

(Applause)

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, in spite of the many challenges, the EFCL -- under its astute leadership -- has completed eight ECCE Centres and is avidly pursuing the successful completion of its entire work programme. I should let you know that this work programme involves the repair of our schools, the construction of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and some of our District Education Offices.

and the bridging of the Spring Village and Real Spring Congratulations to the design consultants Ms. Cheryl Adams and Reynald Associates Limited, the Civil/ Structural Engineer, Planning Associates International Limited, the quantity surveyors, Hart and Leonard (1982) Limited. Together, these agencies and organizations have made a remarkable contribution to the improvement of the quality of life Communities.

This Centre has a design capacity for fifty children where registration would be conducted to facilitate three and four year old children from as early as next week - Tuesday 18th September, 2007. I encourage members of the community to begin the Registration procedure on Monday September 17, 2007. Those who enroll will be provided the opportunity to learn and develop their skills through activities that will be guided by research data and educational theories of learning. The children will also be able to align themselves with appropriate behaviours in the

ambiance of a well-structured ECCE facility with, as you will soon see, the best indoor and outdoor facilities.

This Centre will provide more than the traditional child-care service. In fact, support teams that include members of the community with a good track record as determined by the National Parent Teacher Association and the Ministry of Education's Local School Board will arrange for child care services **before** and **after** the stipulated times and at the start and dismissal of the ECCE Centres. This would cater for those working parents who may not be able to be there immediately at the start and dismissal of the ECCE Centre.

Parents will also be provided opportunities to interact with the teachers on a one-to-one basis and at parent-teacher and community meetings. All children will be provided with nutritional meals. No school fees would be charged at these new centres, and removal of school fees would be done on a phased basis from the next school term for all our other ECCE Centres.

We have already designed a Governance Framework for the ECCE Sector to ensure that:-

- ⇒ All ECCE Centres are **adequately staffed** with fully qualified teachers and caregivers capable of implementing the new curriculum.
- ⇒ There is an appropriate **administrative structure** to be put in place to manage the ECCE Sector.
- ⇒ In addition, a **Quality Assurance** system is being developed to continuously monitor and evaluate the operations of the entire ECCE Sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, the children of the Valsayn Government ECCE Centre would be well cared for by the peer Administrator/Teachers Mrs. Anastasia Coward-Rose and Mrs. Cynthia Celestin and their caring staff including Teacher Assistant Faatima Ali Abdur Rahaman and others whom you would meet at the orientation session next week.

Our peer Administrators have been labouring in the field of ECCE for quite a while. Mrs. Coward-Rose a former facilitator ECCE Facilitator holds a Masters in Education Degree while Ms. Cynthia Celestin a former ECCE Principal holds a Bachelor in Education Degree and is also pursuing studies leading to her Masters in Education Degree. They have both been assisting the

School of Continuing Studies and the Ministry of Education to train ECCE teaching staff. They are leaders.

Leading means being out in front of a working unit. Leading in a child development centre requires skills in interpersonal relations, that is, the ability to develop rapport and motivation among all employees in order to provide high quality services.

Our presence here today and the very existence of this wonderful Early Childhood Care and Education Centre bear testimony of our commitment to provide high quality learning experience support, care and services for all children, regardless of economic status, physical or emotional challenges, ethnic background or gender.

For the period 2000 to 2006 expenditure on education was 14.6 percent of Government spending and 4.4 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. Gross Domestic Product grew by an average of 15.3 percent during the past six years and in 2006 reached a high of Trinidad and Tobago \$114,474 million dollars (the equivalent of US \$18,170 million) with Gross Domestic Product per capital at US \$13,978.

Spring Village and Valsayn are no longer sugar estates but a thriving community. Today the Government is using its abundant resources to diversify the national economy away from oil and gas production, so that we can ensure sustainability of revenue. We are all witnesses to a booming petrochemical and natural gas sub-sector. We are also seeing the emergence of an expanding service and manufacturing sector.

The Ministry of Education, cognizant of Government's National Development Plan has put in place policies and strategies to develop our human resources, sustain national development and ensure that we achieve "developed country status by 2020." Unemployment is down, new jobs have been created. There are numerous job openings that pay well even in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector where there are many opportunities for trained and qualified teachers as well as for personnel to monitor the implementation of the new National ECCE Curriculum Guide at all our ECCE Centres.

Research has demonstrated that Early Education and improved services for young children have a direct and positive impact on later school performance and the quality of life. These can be achieved through a curriculum aimed at producing children capable of becoming life long learners.

It is our aim that at this ultra-modern facility, the young children of Spring Village, Real Spring, Valsayn and environs will benefit from a curriculum geared towards the holistic development of the child. You must ensure that in the final analysis all our citizens demonstrate the attributes of ideal Caribbean people as envisaged by the drafters of the Caribbean Education for all Plan of Action. This to be achieved through a seamless education system, from Early Childhood Care and Education right through to tertiary education. It is hoped that all our citizens will:-

- Become emotionally secure
- Demonstrate strong work ethics
- Have respect for human life
- Demonstrate respect for property
- Be environmentally aware
- Be spiritually aware
- Be responsible
- Be accountable to family and community
- Be entrepreneurial
- Be creative and
- Be central to the development process

Ladies and Gentlemen, the construction of this ECCE Centre on the northern periphery of this UTT Campus which specializes in teacher training is the first of its kind in the country and just maybe, in the entire Caribbean. It therefore affords trainees the opportunity to access this Centre as a research laboratory. This is especially so for those trainee teachers who have opted to specialize in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education.

Students and University lecturers would be able to make observations in this Centre, record their findings and analyze the data collected which should inform not only their planning for teaching, but on ECCE current trends in the field, such endeavours will definitely bring improvement and enhancement of developmentally appropriate practices at our ECCE settings. Student teachers would also be able to conduct demonstration activities, where the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) can hopefully be a forerunner of best practices.

Congratulations to the Campus Co-coordinator Mr. Winston Emmanuel and Staff of this institution now known as the University of Trinidad and Tobago for their hard work and dedication in making this dream a reality.

A similar ECCE Centre is to be constructed at the UTT Campus located at Corinth Settlement – another former sugar estate - where pre-service and in-service student teachers are pursuing Degree Programmes in the field of Education.

Ladies and gentlemen, in keeping with current education reform and global trends in education, all teachers are required to have a Bachelor in Education degree from a recognized university. ECCE teachers are also required to hold Bachelor in Education Degrees. Teacher recruitment is high on the national agenda since in order to become employed as a teacher one must be the holder of a Bachelor in Education degree. An ECCE teacher must also be the holder of a Bachelor in Education degree in ECCE and would receive the salary commensurate with the teacher's qualification. As TTUTA would say "a teacher is a teacher" across the board.

Teacher recruitment will be, in the first instance, based on the qualifications required by the Ministry of Education as outlined in the Administrative Structure. All recruitment will be on the basis of advertisement in the print and/or electronic media, followed by assessments by the Ministry of Education and necessary interviews. Interviews for teaching positions at all levels will be conducted by the Ministry of Education. Denominational bodies shall continue to make recommendations of suitable candidates to the Ministry of Education, provided that they satisfy the entry requirements. All new teachers will participate in an induction programme developed by the Ministry of Education. Denominational Boards may also develop their own induction

programmes, once such programmes are in keeping with the philosophy and programme goals of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education is also offering scholarships in teacher development at the UTT. It is hoped that potential male teachers would capitalize on this opportunity since there is a dearth of men in the teaching profession.

Together, I trust that the teaching and administrative staff will assist in providing a higher quality education for the people of this community.

It is with great pleasure then, that I offer my regards to all the students of the Teacher Training Campus of the UTT at Valsayn, ECCE staff, children and families of Spring Village, Real Spring and Valsayn wishing you continued success in the coming years.

May God richly bless you all.

14th September, 2007.