

## **President's Message**

### Valued Members and Stakeholders

Over the past year, we at the TTCSI have stepped up the advocating for our members, particularly those operating in industries heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, we focussed our advocacy on the Tourism, Maritime, and related industries—recognizing their potential to generate substantial foreign exchange and employment opportunities.

The TTCSI has gained regional and international recognition, positioning itself as the representative organization for services at a regional level. This would not have been possible without the dedication of Team TTCSI and our exceptional CEO, Ms. Vashti Guyadeen, whose five-year tenure has already made a significant impact on our organization and the development of Trinidad and Tobago's Services Sector.

I must also recognize and express my gratitude to the Board of Directors at the TTCSI for their unstinting support and unwavering commitment to the organisation during these challenging times for the Services Sector. Most importantly though, I want to thank our members, who have given us a distinct mandate to fulfil, but also inspires us to push above and beyond. Their resilience and ability to adapt to the "new normal" has been commendable. Indeed, we must leverage this survival instinct as a launch pad for developing new strategies, new revenue streams and innovative means of doing business in the coming years and Team TTCSI stands ready to continue its support of these efforts.

As President, my goal is to build upon the foundation established by past presidents and all those who have served TTCSI over the past 17 years.

During my tenure, we will conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify opportunities for each of our members in their respective sectors. Additionally, we intend to address the obstacles preventing the full realisation of these opportunities by formulating plans to remove or overcome them. This continues to be our primary focus, hence the reason why we held over 150 meetings with key stakeholders over the period, whereby most were made possible through the use and convenience of technology.

The TTCSI represents a significant portion of our economy's vitality, with immense potential for growth and with many sectors yet to be tapped for their potential. To establish and solidify our country's position in the global Services marketplace, we must have the necessary support and professional consideration from the Government. Policymakers must seek guidance from industry professionals to shape the future of the various sectors and move quickly to reform any existing frameworks currently hindering progress. There is no better resource than industry practitioners and professionals to accurately guide the growth and development processes for the sectors in which they are active. To ignore this fact will perpetuate the disconnect between policy and progress.

With the present state of our economy and the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economic shocks it caused, together with impacts of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, the voice of the TTCSI is more relevant and crucial now than ever before. We must work towards stabilizing the T&T economy, as well as identify viable long-term opportunities to attract foreign investment and diversifying and expanding our sources of foreign exchange.

Close collaboration with line Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, and our members is crucial to identifying the gaps between local policies, international operational standards, and business practices. By bridging these disconnects, we can move forward sustainably and capitalize on new revenue opportunities.

I strongly advocate and encourage a solution-driven and collaborative approach to addressing the challenges we face and with critical thinking and thorough analysis of our current situation and future objectives, I am confident we can make the necessary changes to achieve our goals.

In 2021, we launched the "Presidents' Roundtable", offering member Presidents and CEOs the opportunity to share their specific challenges and needs. These discussions have provided invaluable insights and formed the basis for a blueprint that will guide our collective and collaborative efforts to propel our economy forward. We have continued this approach by holding one-on-one meetings with stakeholders, including those in the process of forming associations. We believe such initiatives are critical for the development of the Services Sector, as adherence to standards and certification requirements enables firms and service providers to develop their businesses locally and expand their reach beyond our borders.

We are confident that we have the fortitude to influence the necessary changes to ensure we survive, grow and thrive. We at the TTCSI have certainly demonstrated our preparedness to identify and overcome challenges in support of the success of our members and all

stakeholders within the Services Sector in Trinidad and Tobago as well as for our regional partners.

Once again, I wish to express my gratitude to our valued members, stakeholders, and partners for their unwavering support of our mission. We eagerly anticipate increased collaboration as we continue to build sustainability for all Services industries.

As we look ahead with excitement to our 20th Anniversary in 2026, we know that over the next three years we will continue to build momentum for our Services Industries, the relevance and importance of Services to our economy as we build on our strong foundation of excellence.

Congratulations, TTCSI!