



ADDRESS

By

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

**MAJOR GENERAL (Ret'd)
THE HONOURABLE EDMUND DILLON**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS GRADUATION
CEREMONY FOR CYCLE 1801**

Graduation Theme: Give Effort Today, Increase Tomorrow (GET IT)

DATE: Wednesday 27 June, 2018

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

**VENUE: Trinidad and Tobago Regiment
Headquarters, Field 17, Lot R 57, Garden
Road, Aranguez**

A pleasant good morning to you all.

It is my distinguished honour to address you this morning on this especially significant occasion which will shape the future of our nation's youth.

Today's graduation ceremony celebrates the end of another successful cycle of the six (6) month Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) programme, under the purview of the Ministry of National Security and administered by the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force. Today we recognise the momentous achievement of the trainees and the positive impact the programme has and will continue to have on their lives.

I extend hearty congratulations to the **seven hundred and forty-nine (749)** graduating young men and women from Trinidad and Tobago, in achieving this milestone. I want to specially commend you for your hard work and resulting successful completion of this programme. I trust that you would have formed new bonds with your fellow trainees who equally share your ambition, discipline, determination and commitment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Government recognises that it is critical to invest in the wellbeing of the country's youth. This undertaking has been reinforced in Government's **Vision 2030 Draft National Development Strategy**, which prioritises youth related issues in the development agenda under the theme of **Putting People First: Nurturing Our Greatest Asset**. We will continue to create conditions for social advancement across all segments of the population, with

particular emphasis on the youth, along with the promotion of strong families and strong communities, as the foundation for social crime prevention.

The youth are our hopes and dreams for a bright and successful Trinidad and Tobago. All of you here today, you are the future. This Government will therefore, continue to pursue policies that will empower you our youth, by:

- Promoting and encouraging participation of the youth in all aspects of sustainable development;
- Fostering a greater understanding of the needs of young people and provide guidelines for youth development;
- Creating an enabling environment by developing a culture whereby young people desire and involve themselves in entrepreneurship by owning their own business;
- Developing youth to become leaders and role models in communities across Trinidad and Tobago by providing them with training in civic responsibility and human rights.

Testament to the commitment above, the Ministry of National Security remains focused on providing our nation's youths with more positive opportunities through our investment in youth-centred programmes such as the Military Led Academic Training (MiLAT) Programme, the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force, the Citizen Security Programme, "The Right Tunes" Programme as well our continued support for youth clubs established within the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service.

Similarly, the CCC programme is conducted in accordance with the Government's pro-social developmental strategies and with its crime prevention initiatives, which include providing alternative opportunities for socialisation and good training for our nation's young people. The CCC programme is a demonstration of this Government's commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind and it embraces the growth and development of our youth. We at the Ministry share the CCC's strong belief that all young people can have a worthwhile future.

Our goal is to assist our young people in realizing their true potential to contribute meaningfully and creatively to the growth of our country while, at the same time, give them the support to fulfil their personal goals and dreams. All we ask of you trainees, therefore is that you recognize your responsibility to add value by contributing positively to your respective communities.

Today I give you the assurance that the Ministry of National Security and by extension the Government will continue its support of youth-centred programmes, so that our young people are steered away from the possibility of engaging in criminal activities and develop and utilize their skills to serve their country in a positive and productive manner.

In this vein, I take the opportunity to commend the CCC programme's Director Major Cheryl Richardson and her team of administrators who have overseen the programme's successful sustainment over the

years. These dedicated officers never cease in their efforts to instil positive social consciousness in the youths under their charge.

From what I understand, a Tracer Studies conducted in 2017 with a sample size of past graduates indicates that seventy-seven percent (77%) of graduates are employed. Of those employed, twenty five percent (25%) are employed within the Public Sector including the protective services, and the remaining fifty two percent (52%) are employed in the Private Sector, of which ten percent (10%) represent those that are self-employed business owners.

To the parents and guardians of the graduates, thank you for being here today and I urge you to continue to play an active role in the lives of your children. Your positive encouragement will set them on the right track for continuous development and national service.

To the seven hundred and ninety-two (792) graduating trainees graduating today, I urge you to keep a level-head and practice what you have learnt in this programme. I give you the challenge today to go back into your communities and serve as an inspiration to your siblings, neighbours and your peers.

Your CCC administrators, team supervisors and instructors have done their part in setting you on the upstream course of life and I remind you of today's theme **“Give Effort Today, Increase Tomorrow (GET IT)”**. Your journey does not end here, today is just the beginning of your continued development.

Continue to make the right choice and follow the right path in life through constant self-development and further education so that you contribute positively to our nation. Remain focused and remember who you are. Do not allow circumstances to define you, instead let you positive achievement define you. Believe in yourself. Respect and obey your parents, guardians, elders, teachers and authority figures even throughout adulthood. Associate only with individuals who seek to uplift you, stay away from criminal influences and elements. Most importantly, stay on the right side of the law.

Commit to be the best you can be. We as a Government and nation have made a significant investment in you and expect that you will be law-abiding, peaceful and exemplary citizens who set a good example for your younger siblings and peers. We look forward to great success from you as you progress on your life's journey.

The Government will continue to invest in education and training; activities that generate employment and enterprise; and programmes which foster mental health and well-being. This so that Trinidad and Tobago will be a safer place for everyone. In this vein, I must make mention that in the coming weeks, we can all look forward to the launch of the National Crime Prevention Programme (NCP), an initiative which will encourage increased citizen action towards making our communities safer for all.

I thank you and may God bless you all and continue to bless our nation.