

# The Multi-Purpose Court, Beetham Gardens

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REMARKS

BY

THE MINISTER OF STATE  
IN THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR LAVENTILLE  
EAST/ MORVANT

THE HONOURABLE DONNA COX

AT THE

COMMEMORATION CEREMONY OF  
THE MULTI-PURPOSE COURT, BEETHAM GARDENS, PHASE IV

PLACE: Phase IV, Multi Purpose Court, Beetham Gardens

DATE: Thursday 4th March 2010

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

Member of Parliament for Laventille West, The Honourable NiLeung Hypolite

Chief Executive Officer, San Juan Laventille Regional Corporation,  
Ms. Genet Pilgrim Simmons

Councillor, San Juan Laventille Regional Corporation  
Mr. James Henry

Chairman, East Port of Spain Development Company Limited  
Mr. Anthony Fifi

Managing Director, East Port of Spain Development Company Limited, Ms. Deborah Thomas

Board of Management of the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited

Representative of the Beetham Gardens, Community Working Group, Mr Jason Sampson,

Resident of the Beetham Gardens Phase IV

Constituents of Laventille East/ Morvant

Specially Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am always happy to be in the constituency of Laventille East/Morvant. Not only because I am the Member of Parliament for the area but also because I grew up here.

I wish to thank the Board of Directors and Management of the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited for inviting me to this ceremony and for the opportunity to speak on the completion of the refurbishing works of the Phase Four, Multi-Purpose Court.

Let me also thank the residents of Beetham Gardens, who provided and offered solutions to the numerous setbacks that the project initially experienced. You should be proud of the part you played in bringing this project to fruition.

I have been informed that the court is now fully functional and can serve dual purposes – as a sporting centre as well as a meeting place for the community.

In this regard, the Government is committed to investing in people and communities, because people are the building blocks of development. I am sure you will agree that communities are the rock on which good relations and peace are built on.

East Port-of-Spain has been declared a Special Development Zone, in which special attention is to be paid to the economic and social challenges faced by its residents. The completion of this Court in Beetham Phase Four, is therefore, just one of the many projects that are scheduled to take place here and in the communities around East Port of Spain.

The construction of this Multi-Purpose Court is by no means an answer to the social and physical challenges within Beetham Gardens, I am sure that the Court will serve as a platform on which many other projects and programmes can be launched.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security and Member of Parliament for Laventille East/Morvant I share a deep concern about the current crime situation in the country and even more so in the communities of East Port of Spain.

It is true that crime is a major challenge in every society today, but we must do all that we can to stamp it out of our communities. The illegal wealth derived from crime; especially from the drug trade is sometimes used to recruit citizens to a life of crime, by offering them far more than they could obtain from legal employment.

The Government is cognizant of this fact and we see the reduction of crime as our number one priority and intend to keep this at the fore front of our agenda.

I wish to encourage our nation's young people to resist the temptation of "quick" money through a life of crime. Contrary to what some of us may believe, it is not an easy or glamorous life. Many, if not most of the criminal elements in our society, lose their lives tragically.

It is therefore, very important that we do everything we can to reclaim our youth by steering them away from a life of crime and providing them with viable alternatives.

Residents, allow me the opportunity to reiterate the statements that I made to the students of the Russell Latapy and Malick Senior Comprehensive Schools last year on the importance of education and sports.

I believe that education, sports, and the involvement in cultural activities can create the kind of positive changes we need to see in our youth. Through these avenues, our youth can learn positive values such as responsibility, independence and morality. The absence of these principles translates directly to lawlessness and criminal activity.

Many more of our nation's young men and women must be encouraged and inspired to adopt nation-building virtues such as respect for authority, self-discipline and an appreciation for hard and honest work.

Through a range of educational programmes, young people are being taught the fundamentals of responsible citizenship and appreciation for their country's diverse history.

Among these initiatives is the Citizen Security Programme (CSP), of the Ministry of National Security which was launched in 2007. The main focus of the CSP is to increase the levels of safety and security within our communities.

The Citizen Security Programme has been working closely with the residents of its partner communities of St. Barbs, Gonzales, Never Dirty, MON Repos, Sogren Trace and Beetham Gardens, to identify strategies which will result in the reduction and elimination of violence in these communities. To date, a range of programmes have been implemented which includes:

- Training in child abuse prevention, domestic violence prevention and proposal writing. Scholarships are now being offered to three persons from each of the identified communities to pursue a Certificate in Counselling from the University of the West Indies.
- Another ongoing programme is a Parent Outreach Programme in Beetham Gardens (which is not on its second phase).
- In addition, the CSP seeks to support a number of highly successful existing programmes for the differently abled in the area.
- The CSP organised volunteers from UWI and CARICOM to paint and clean the Beetham Junior Life Centre. This is to facilitate the creation of a youth friendly space which could host performing arts classes, training programmes and other activities.
- The CSP has also supported a small goal competition which was organised by the Garrison Sport Promotion Group. This competition was a unification project intended to bring together residents from rival section in the community.

Some of Government's other youth initiatives include the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force, the Military Led Academic Training Programme (MILAT), the Military Led Youth Programme of Apprenticeship and Re-orientation (MYPART) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), all geared towards making our youth responsible persons.

Over the years several events have been reintroduced to the East Port of Spain community, which include a small goal tournament, and late evening basketball that I understand are very popular and heavily supported.

I have been told that the East Development Company will also design a programme to satisfy the sporting needs of the community. This would include sporting clinics, sports therapy, coaching, resources for sport, health and fitness, sport as a career, and other related workshops, which will serve as part of their wider "Sports Plus" initiative.

Residents, always remember that sport plays a vital role in the holistic development of young people. It fosters their physical and emotional health, it has been proven that involvement in sports builds bridges and promotes friendship.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you very much for your attention

May God Bless the residents of Beetham Gardens

May God Bless our Nation

I thank you.