

**The Minister of Public Administration (Hon. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute in this year's budget presentation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the role of Government is to facilitate development. Our job is to provide goods and services, develop programs, policies and projects and create an environment in which our citizens could be comfortable, committed and, most of all, creative. Our job is to take care of the infrastructure and simultaneously to develop benefits and opportunities to make life better for all our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, in that context, therefore, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance and the Economy which, in my view, he has brought together—he has weaved together—all the various threads which would emerge in a tapestry. The development of a nation will not take place over one year, but over a period of time. You would recall, since 2012, in this Parliament, after assuming the portfolio of Minister of Public Administration, I embarked on what is called the Gold to Diamond journey—we refer to it as G2D. This journey uses the successes of the public service. We have celebrated 50 years in 2012 and from the successes of the public service we are able now to look at how we want to transform institutions, processes, systems and improve governance overall in the public service. All of this to be able to deliver more value for money, to enhance national competitiveness and to accelerate the ease of doing business.

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We defined the Gold to Diamond vision as—we call it several names. You could speak to it as the no wrong door—members here would have heard me speak to this before; the no wrong door approach; bundled offerings, the one-stop shop for government services; multichannel access and joined-up government. What this means is that we would be able to go into any public office, by the year 2022 and be able to obtain any public service.

Mr. Speaker, in moving forward in that way, when we start talking about the Gold to Diamond journey itself—this 10-year journey that have designed, starting in 2012 and ending in 2022—one of the things that we must put it in the context of is what we have and the challenges that we face today in the public service.

As we all know what we are trying to deal with in the Gold to Diamond journey is how we modernize the archaic processes and the bureaucratic systems within the public service; the low levels of customer service, which we hear about every day and productivity; and, as we know today, as well, customers, citizens, not only do they want to tell you how bad your customer service is, but they also want to participate. They want to give suggestions and they want to be part of the process in improving services delivered by Government, in addition, how we actually deal with the declining ease of doing business and the global competitiveness. All of this, it is deemed that the public service is an impediment to the ease of doing business in Trinidad and Tobago. Most important, we have had a lack

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of career opportunities for professionals, including support staff due to the archaic job descriptions, many of them existing since 1962. The Gold to Diamond initiative proposes to employ strategies whereby a ministry has the right resources at the right time with human resources possessing the right competencies to effectively deliver outstanding value to the ministries' clients.

Mr. Speaker, this year—to put all of this in context—I really want to treat with what I call the modern 21<sup>st</sup> Century public officer. Who is this modern 21<sup>st</sup> Century public officer? When I speak to the profile of this modern public officer, this is an individual who is multi-skilled, highly competent in technical areas of functional groups, proactive, motivated, autonomous—meaning I do not have to depend on somebody to give me an instruction—efficient, “I’m very concerned about citizens so I am customer and citizen-centric and I am also very technology savvy.”

Mr. Speaker, the move to what we call our HRM architecture—we refer to it as the Diamond HRM Architecture—because, as you know, I have said this before, in this House, that the structure of the public service is very pyramidal. It is bottom heavy with very little middle management. The new diamond structure involves actually expanding the middle management level which is where we expect to see a number of new professional opportunities and empowerment.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we are speaking about this new public service and this new HRM architecture, we are talking about the creation of more

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modern and integrated jobs, opportunities for public officers to become more mobile in their career paths; the bringing of the public service in line with needs of the 21<sup>st</sup>. Century, the implementation of a structure and classification system that can attract and retain technical expertise through modern compensation systems. For too long it has been said that the compensation systems that we have in the public service is unable to retain the expertise that is needed. Fifthly, Mr. Speaker, speaking to the stronger adoption of a meritocracy approach to HRM in which appointments and promotions are based on tested, on tested ability or achievements and competencies.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we speak of the new public officer, he or she is, therefore, someone who becomes engaged in flexible work with people in an integrated way, while acquiring new skills and competencies. I want to make this point, Mr. Speaker, that when we celebrate the diamond anniversary of our nation in 2022, the public service would have been modernized. It would not have been modernized by ministers—when we speak to government, as government ministers—but by the public officers themselves. They will be the driving force; the brains behind the technology and the spirit of this progress.

Public officers, at the end of the day are also consumers of the same goods and services as any other citizen. Therefore, they want to be part of the solutions because they want better lives for themselves, their families, their communities and their country. If they are buying into modernization,

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because they see the benefits that are daily becoming available, apparent and accessible.

Mr. Speaker, to start this whole process I need to put this in context because one of the first things that we have done is we have developed a new public service philosophy. This philosophy is driven by the provision of courteous and reliable service whilst safeguarding the public interest and upholding the public trust. This is a very important concern, because when we did surveys you would note that citizens want to know that they can trust public officers. The public service is committed to ensuring that it is fit for purpose; it is structured, staffed and resourced to constantly deliver quality service to citizens in Trinidad and Tobago and its client groups.

The philosophy embraces the view that organizational and individual adherence to the public service's core institutional values as well as the principle based, purpose-driven behaviour and an orientation to achieving results that are among the key requirements for a modern effective public service. When we speak to the core values, we are speaking about honesty, integrity, objectivity and impartiality.

I say this because what we have done, as well—I move to the next point—last year I spoke about the competency-based framework approach to the public service and there are many benefits from that. This year, I am pleased to say that we are ready to move forward with this particular project in that a consultant has been sourced, through our open tendering process, and we are now ready to award this project which will last for the next 13

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months. Therefore, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century public officer would have skills and we would now see a competency-based framework which will allow for the public officer to have skills, knowledge and behaviour that leads to successful performance. This is what we refer to as the competencies. So the modern public officer will have, at least, 10 competencies which they will continuously improve from one level to the next because in the public service itself you would have about six levels in the middle management, three at the top level and probably three to four at the bottom of the organization. Each of these competencies would have to be built and they will have to continuously improve as they move from one level to the next.

What are these competencies we are talking about? For example, understanding the big picture; changing and continuous improvement; how do you respond to innovation; how do you seek out opportunities to create effective improvements and making effective decisions. We make a lot of decisions, but if we want an empowered organization, then public officers must know how to make effective decisions, and these decisions must be objective; they must exercise sound judgments and, most important, they must be evidence-based. They must be able to be results driven—deliver results. How do they achieve commercial outcomes? Are they results based? Are they delivering value for money. Therefore, at the senior level—you would be looking at the senior level to be able to ensure that they bring in a culture for value for money. When we are dealing at the lower levels of the organization we will expect public officers, modern public officers, to

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question and challenge, respectfully, where there appear to prevent good value for money. How do they manage quality service; how do they deliver at a pace; how do they engage people. For example, leading and communicating. What are their communication skill sets. When we talk about leadership—principle-centred leadership—fairness and opportunity; how much of that is created by the leaders in the organization; and, most important, collaborating and partnership. We talked already about team development, that is an important competency and it is about how you build trusting relationships; positive and trusting relationships, and at the senior level, what are you doing to develop an inclusive environment.

Most important, Mr. Speaker, how do we build capability at the senior level. Are the senior level managers encouraging talent management within the organization; and for the lower levels, are junior public officers involved in a continuous learning culture. So, we are in the process of awarding this contract. This project will take another 13 months to roll out and we expect to spend at least TT \$12 million on this particular project.

Mr. Speaker, what will be the benefits of this competency-based framework? This is going to be the core. It will allow, for example, open and transparent recruitment processes because now we can use competency-based interviewing techniques. We have started that already in the service, using competency-based assessment approaches. Secondly, it will allow for effective performance management systems. Thirdly, it will allow for a new compensation policy which we are in the process of developing; a new

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compensation policy which will not only deal with what we call performance reward systems which will pay for performance, but will also reward you for competencies that you develop, and new skill set that you develop in the organization.

What we envisage is that at the lower levels of the organization we will devise a compensation system that will reward you for building competencies and at the senior levels of the organization, you will be rewarded more for performance, part of which is how you help to develop the competencies within the organization.

Mr. Speaker, on this basis, therefore, I want to say that one of the things that this will help us significantly, in terms of workforce planning, learning management, succession planning and career development, because at all times we are able to assist the skills gaps and be able to put learning programmes in place to address this.

**8.55 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the diamond structure of HRM Architecture, it is important to note that one of the things that we have done over the last year, is that we have looked at all the jobs, and I mentioned this last year in my budget contribution, and this is a continuation. We have looked at all the jobs, the skill sets that are required for a modern public service. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that at the middle-management level which we are focused on, because this is where we expect empowerment, this is where we expect a lot of innovation to take place. We have developed a number of new jobs. I am talking here about close to 49 positions—job descriptions—

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that we have developed for the middle-management area.

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Let me just tell you the areas we are talking about: information and information technology; information and communication technology, ICT; monitoring and evaluation; project and procurement management, because without programme management, we will not be able to actually deliver on performance informed budgeting and results-based management; facilities management; communications; new forms of HRM, for example, the HRM specialist who can take care of change-management issues.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have looked at the structure, the competency-based framework I am speaking to, will work alongside a competency-based framework for the professional stream as well. So they go hand in hand, Mr. Speaker, and based on consultations and so on that we have held we were able to come up with these new job descriptions. I am pleased to say, that all of those 49 positions have gone to the Chief Personnel Office of the Personnel Department for classification. So that we will now have pensionable positions in these areas.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to give one example of how it works, because one of the things that we did was that we actually looked at the ICT framework. I am just using this as an example to show you the process that we used over the last year. So in terms of the methodology itself, because we recognize information as a strategic resource in any organization, we started with that stream ICT, because we recognize how weak it is.

I do not know if many of you know some of the jobs that exist on the establishment for ICT. And these jobs include, and I will just name them: the EDP Manager, the data clerk EDP; the control clerk EDP, conversion

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equipment operator, computer operator. Mr. Speaker, that is the extent of ICT jobs on our establishment of the public service. And, therefore, this was why we took the opportunity to look at creating that framework for ICT in the public service.

So we embarked on a project to standardize a set of IT fields across the public service, through the development of a model organizational structure. What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that we have developed and we have looked at Ministries, and we have developed model structures for different categories of Ministries. Therefore, the standardized job descriptions and job designations were developed.

Now, this was developed, in terms of when we looked across the board, through the workshops, and coming out of that, we got 22 standardized jobs descriptions. We utilized the skills framework for the information age, which is called SFIA. It is an English-based system, but we used that in the absence of having a competency-based framework of our own. So that became our competency-based framework, the professional side, and we were able to develop those ICT positions.

Mr. Speaker, I just want you to understand as well, that there are seven levels of responsibility in that ICT stream, and what we have seen today, are jobs such as those involving ICT governance, for example, Mr. Speaker, you know, security. But in order to achieve those jobs, one of the things the report had to do—the project, was they had to carry out a visioning exercise. I am just illustrating this to show you the methodology that was used, this was used for all the others, whether it is monitoring and evaluation, whether it is legal, whether it is communication, facilities

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management, project management.

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So we did a visioning exercise, for example, in ICT. You will note that, for example, they had do things like the cloud computing. Whatever the new job skill sets are, they must be able to take care of mobile computing, cloud computing, how you bring your own devices to work, process automation, crowdsourcing, security, data protection, mobile workforce, because many people are able to work from home going forward. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, based on that visioning exercise, we were able to come with those 22 positions and we were able to come up with those standard structures.

I am pleased to say that that has gone for classification, and right now, Mr. Speaker, they are being used in contract positions. Just before I go to contract positions, just let me also say I am pleased to announce last year, I indicated that we had come up with the whole MSO series which replaces all the MSO stream, Management Support Office stream, which has been created to replace the clerical and manipulative group within the public service, they replaced the clerical and secretarial framework, and this is the new backbone of the new structure. You know, we are talking about multi-skilled public officers with greater scope, competencies and autonomy.

I mentioned this last year, Mr. Speaker, these people who would be technology savvy, who are capable of multi-tasking and customer services, with some project management capacity. I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, the management support office stream or what we call the management support stream, support series, has been classified by the CPO. The terms and conditions have been determined for these positions, and my

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understanding is right now there are ongoing discussions between the union and the CPO for the adoption of these positions.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will see a new stream coming in, in this fiscal year for the management support series which will replace the archaic clerical streams that were there before. I would also like to indicate that while we speak to these positions that are to become pensionable positions, become permanent positions on the establishment, we have no other choice that while we wait on this process, the classification process, that we use contract positions. As a result of that, all the jobs that have been developed, the job descriptions, et cetera, we are using them for standardized contract positions with standard terms and conditions.

I really want us to speak to this issue, because one of the problems I had coming in as Minister of Public Administration, was when I looked at the process and the complaints and the pleas from contract officers, for terms and conditions to be determined. I do not know if you all are aware, Members on the other side, that you have people who have served on contract positions three, six years, and their contracts have come to an expiration, and there have been no terms and conditions for these contract officers in the public service. As a result of that, I have seen recently someone who got their terms and conditions after their contract expired more than six years ago. I consider this unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

So as a result of standardizing the contract job descriptions, and the terms and conditions, we reduce the delays—you know, the protracted timeframes required to determine terms and conditions for a contract officer. So as a result of that, a contract officer who is coming in, a job is advertised,

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that person who is applying for the job, actually knows the terms and conditions on which he or she is coming on for that job.

And, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this situation as well, I found myself in no other position, but to look at how we were able to actually reduce the backlog. It was amazing to me how many Ministries complained about backlogs. My colleagues, Ministers, came to me with lists upon lists of contract positions that terms and conditions have not been determined for. Now, when terms and conditions are not determined, contracts cannot be executed, and this is why the Auditor General continuously reports on the number of non-contracts, contracts that do not exist for employment, because no terms and conditions have been determined by the Personnel Department.

Mr. Speaker, I started a backlog project in the Ministry of Public Administration, in collaboration with the Personnel Department and with the appropriate use of technology and with the appropriate use of temporary staff. We were able to regularize terms and conditions for at least 1,492 persons, by April of this year. And we are about to complete, we believe we have done about 2,000 employees today. We are starting that project again, and I am not going to stop it until we clear that backlog completely. I find it unfortunate, I find it unfair that contract officers have no contracts to go to a bank. So on that basis, let me say even the MSO series that we have, we are going to continue as well with what we call BOAs, Business Operation Assistants, as the interim contract positions for the MSOs, until the MSO series comes in.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say as well, that the GHRS, because we are

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dealing with a very merit-based system—the GHRIS has developed a database, and they have assessed using the computer laboratories, because we are using multi-phased type of assessments for recruitment and selection. So they have been assessing those who applied online to the GHRIS, through their database, and they have assessed them at their computer laboratories, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say that in October 2013, GHRIS conducted a competency-based exercise involving 339 applicants. Let me just say, the e-recruitment be application for BOA Is stand at 1,428; BOA IIs, 1,104. And little by little, Mr. Speaker, batch by batch, they have been going around the country using the various campuses of the UTT to actually assess these BOA Is, and BOA IIs, so that we have a database of people already assessed in competencies, whether it is in memo writing and Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint, project management, Mr. Speaker, ready for employment. This is the way that we will also build the skill sets, and give people the opportunity and the experience which they themselves can go out into the private sector, because these are the skills sets that are needed even in the private sector.

In terms of executive leadership, I just want to continue to say that, you know, we continue the Executive Leadership Programme, and we have—you know, it targets two levels of public officers, leaders and deputy permanent secretaries. Activities under this programme will continue to include under the development programme, the deputy permanent secretaries orientation programme, the Harvard Kennedy School of Business Executive Education, Managing Change in The Dynamic World, Harvard Kennedy

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School of Business Executive Education, chaos, Conflict and Courage; Caribbean Leadership Programme, Leadership Development Programme. I think, Mr. Speaker, you will realize as well, you had Members from within this Parliament who participated in this leadership programme. Mr. Speaker, this programme costed us as of last fiscal year, \$600, 000.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that we are dealing with, the modern public officer must be flexible. The modern public officer, you know, I hear a lot of people talk about traffic into Port of Spain, and the only way to get here is by a rapid rail system, when we should be looking at new ways of working, whether it is through flexitime or hot desking. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? People can come out and work from six to two, they can work from seven to three, eight to four, nine to five, 10 to six, but it requires us to re-engineer the work processes to allow for some autonomy which we are doing right now, Mr. Speaker.

In part of our—in the whole issue, we noticed that we have a shortage of high cost accommodation. If you want to provide accommodation that is conducive for the modern public officer to work, then we have to provide expensive and sophisticated workstations. That means, and this is a global practice, it means that not all employees can be at a workstation, some will be on the field. For example, case managers in the Ministry of the People and Social Development, field officers in many of these Ministries. And in most cases some of them, they work from home, and sometimes be on the job.

In fact, the ratio, Mr. Speaker, tends to be almost seven to eight workstations for every 10 to 11 employees. And this is where we need to

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go. Our outfitting policy which we did in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, allows for this sophisticated type of workstation environment, and for such working environments. And with the technology and a public officer, the 21st Century public officer who is technology savvy, we can have that high degree of independence and responsibility. Mr. Speaker, this is where we are going—this is where the public officer of the 21st Century must be going. If we are to go that way, then we also have to talk about training and development.

The Public Service Academy, Mr. Speaker, is one of the facilities that the public service has to allow for on-the-job training, and in-service training for public officers, and to allow for capacity development. Let me just say for the last fiscal year 2014, PSA, the Public Service Academy trained over approximately 800 public officers from various agencies of the Government, and this was at a cost of \$2 million. These training programmes, for example, Mr. Speaker, included business communication, financial management and procurement, professional development, leadership, organization improvement, service delivery, service excellence, customer service. Mr. Speaker, because you will know that at many of the public agencies a lot of customer service agents will now be available because of that service delivery excellence training and customer service training.

**9.10 p.m.**

In particular, all our BOAs, starting at the bottom of the organization, must have customer service training. In addition to these local training programmes, PSA also facilitates foreign training programmes in cutting edge fields such as ICT, engineering, monitoring and evaluation, wastewater

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management, renewable energy and the likes, and this means that public officers are also exposed to international programmes and global interactions.

In fiscal 2015, we shall be embarking on a project to strengthen the Public Service Academy, mainly to make it into something like a civil service college as has happened in Canada, and we have seen one. We have seen the Public Service College in Singapore. One of the areas we want to strengthen is what we call e-learning because if we are to accelerate the learning and the experience of the modern 21st Century public officer, we have to accelerate the training and development within the public service. To do so, we can do so by e-learning because we will reach more public officers at that time.

We are looking at an e-learning strategy that will be actually be dealt with in three phases, the first phase being that they will be able to do most of their work online and be certified for the first phase. The second phase will allow them to interact with other members from other agencies at the training centre and there they will also be certified and then, at the third phase, they must come back into the Ministry and actually implement what they have learnt before they get a final certification. Only when they have completed all three phases, can they be deemed to be certified in the particular area. So, this is how we will accelerate this area and how we will accelerate the learning and development in the public service.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn my attention now to scholarships and training because a lot has been said about scholarships even during this debate. I want to start off by saying, we have increased the number of

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scholarships in the Ministry of Public Administration and, in fact, approximately 1,935 scholarships were awarded to nationals over the last three years and this will increase by the end of this month to 2,085. We also expect, by the end of this month, we would have spent close to \$245 million on these scholars over the last fiscal year.

You know, I am sorry that the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West is not here because she constantly raises this issue about scholarships and the problem I have is that every policy—since I have come into this Ministry, we have developed policies for deferral of obligatory service, for continuation of scholarships; sometimes you may have a problem and you may have to ask for an extension on your scholarship. We have developed transparent policies for the duration of your commitment, of your obligatory service.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I want to say is that every one of those scholarships that we have on offering, each one has an evaluation framework, which is published on the website, and each of those frameworks, you can actually go on and you can actually score yourself and know how you will score because it is an objective set of criteria before you can be shortlisted for an interview. There are a set of eligibility criteria. If you do not meet it; you cannot cross that hurdle.

And I want to say to all Members because, you know, many times Members of Parliament approach me; they make requests of me, saying that they want help. This person missed the deadline for a scholarship, and I have to tell them there is absolutely nothing I can do because the system will know if I went in to interfere.

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That is one of the good things about e-services, you know. When you have an online automated system, there is no interference by anyone, not even a public officer because it will be time stamped. So, if you miss your deadline, that is up to you. Your referees do not—and that is one of the things we warn, we warn, we warn, students, candidates. Make sure, get on to the site. There is paper-based application. It is all online. You can do online applications anywhere in the country, from any tconnect centre.

You can monitor the progress of your own scholarship, so I always wonder when the Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, every time, talks about who are the people who are getting scholarships, I want to tell her where she can find them. Just go on the website of the Ministry of Public Administration, under scholarships, and every name is published. The person who was awarded a scholarship, the area of study they are pursuing and the institution at which they are studying. So it is completely transparent and open. And I will have it no other way.

In fact, I have a challenge right now because I will speak to the open government and in open government, we have to be able to publish all of government data. The Ministry of Public Administration, I have made a commitment that this will be the Ministry that will start open government and publishing its data sets. And I have indicated to my Ministry that I would like, for example, to ensure that all the final scores of these students must be published.

I am being told by my legal department that they have to check with the Data Protection Act and all of that and whatever, but I am insisting that we go to that point where the scores themselves, from the interviews, can be

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published on the website so there can be no question. I intend, whenever we are dealing with taxpayers' money, we must be totally accountable for public funds. [*Desk thumping*]

We have increased the number of scholarships in the allied health care area: meteorology, forensic science, pathology, oncology, cardiology, neurology and these will be coming on stream this year—some have already come on stream—and that is because when we look at the staffing requirements, the skill sets required for these modern health first services that the Ministry of Health is trying to offer through some of the infrastructure projects that they are doing. The Minister of Health will speak more to those issues.

I just quickly want to say one other issue and that has to do with the placement. One of the problems we had with returning scholars—they used to be frustrated because they could not be placed. They cannot get a job and one of the reasons is that we have a situation where many of them study in areas which are not aligned to the development needs of the country. If it is, and we do not interfere with the A level CAPE students—I am talking about all the other scholarships—they are all aligned to the interim human resource needs of the country and, therefore, if we need petroleum engineers, that is on the list as a priority one. If we need financial analysts, it is there.

The interim human resource needs are up on the website. If it is not listed, even if you are a first class honours, you will not get a scholarship. It must be on the interim human resource needs list. Since we have been doing that, we have been finding that there is less frustration for the students when they come back here and they have to be placed, even if they have to be placed

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I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, by opening up this new middle management level and opening up the number of new professional opportunities which did not exist before, we now have a number of new opportunities for these returning scholars. As a result of that, we have also accelerated the placement process.

In the past, I would have heard scholars complain; they have returned to Trinidad and Tobago, six, seven, eight, nine months and no placement. These people are sitting there starving. We have developed a placement policy after meeting with returning scholars and carrying on consultations with all of them. We now have a new placement policy. It is on our website. One of the first things is that the Ministry of Public Administration must place this scholar within three months of returning to Trinidad and Tobago.

Secondly, it must be in an area of their field of study. It makes no sense that someone who has studied in a particular area is placed somewhere else where they cannot further develop those skill sets. In addition to that, in order to be able to accelerate their experience and accelerate their own development, you know when scholars return, they are not yet ready for work, so we place them on the Associate Professional Programme, it is called the AP Programme where they get an opportunity to develop skill sets.

We also have them on the Professional Development Programme and this Professional Development Programme is not cheap. It is about \$800,000 where we take each of these scholars, we carry them through a

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process where they must be able—and they have re-designed it and we have actually revamped it where they are able to develop new skill sets, whether it is in team building, leadership; how they develop their own career path, analytics, so that they are actually ready for the world of work. So when they are eventually placed, when all of them are placed in these positions, they are ready to start working on teams. So they learn a bit of project management within the public service; the methodology, et cetera.

So, Mr. Speaker, just very quickly, we do employ these APs. They are \$9,000 a month. We try to keep it down to one year. Before, it was two, three years we carried on APs because we could not find places for them. Today, we have set ourselves a process that they must be placed within 12 months—no more than 12 months on the AP programme, and all of that because when they are on an AP contract, they cannot get a car loan, they cannot get a mortgage, so they are dependent on their parents, et cetera, so the faster they come off the AP programme and get out into a permanent job, then they can start at becoming self-sufficient.

All of this I am saying here in terms of institutional strengthening and so on. The Service Commissions Department has been operating with a lot of old systems and the new type of competency-based framework we are speaking to—competencies, new and modern processes for selection and recruitment, et cetera—how do you operate in a dynamic environment.

The Canadian Public Service Commission and some of the other public service commissions, globally, are charged with the responsibility, for example, of understanding the HR strategy of the organization and ensuring that the organization meets its HR strategy. They also perform roles of

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auditing and compliance to ensure that procedures are followed and that the approaches are merit based.

Mr. Speaker, we have started a project, and I am pleased to say that institutional strengthening of the Service Commissions Department will start this year at a cost of \$10.3 million. This is part of our PSIP programme and, therefore, we will be able to modernize systems in the Service Commissions Department itself. Similarly, in the Personnel Department, the CPO's office, we are also looking at new forms of management, new practices, et cetera, and they will also be embarking on an institutional strengthening project at a cost of \$7.7 billion.

I just want to turn very quickly to our e-Government and Knowledge Brokering Loan Programme because this is part of transformation of the public service. I think a lot of people look at e-Government as a technology solution; it is not. If we are to have transformation, we have to have e-Government and e-Government means that we are talking about people and how effective it can be.

It was really a programme that was designed to increase the effectiveness and the efficiency of public services through expansion, development and implementation of e-government solutions. There are many such projects and I do not want to go through all of them. They range across the public service, including the Parliament here, the *Hansard*, e-Parliament, et cetera.

I know my colleague, the Minister of Land and Marine Resources, will also speak about unmanned aerial vehicles, the drones for the mapping system. That is at a cost of \$11 million. The aerial and LiDAR survey that

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we are talking about, we have not had this survey done since 1991. That will be at \$7 million. The upgrade of the Cadastral Management Information System at a cost of \$22.9 million. So all in all, with land surveys and housing, it is about \$41 million that we are speaking to.

The Minister of Health will also speak to the development of master plans for San Fernando, Port of Spain and the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex hospitals at a cost of \$18 million. My colleague, the Minister of Diversity and Social Integration, spoke to the National Archives project for the modernization and that is also under this particular project.

Just to show you very quickly how this works, it is just that it uses—and I just want to use an example because the Minister of Science and Technology spoke to the Middleware software, the foundation system interface which will allow us to roll out e-Government services quickly.

Once that is implemented, we will be able to get into authentication. We will be able to roll out the e-payment systems, online payment systems and, as a result of that, we would be able to see more e-services over the next fiscal year.

I am just giving you an example. One of the projects that we are working on, just to show you how it works together with transformation. As we know, the Inland Revenue Division is one of the pilots under the Gold to Diamond to put in the new HRM architecture, but to go together with it is what we call the GenTax upgrade and, therefore, we have already implemented the new hardware and software under this programme to the cost of \$9 million. The actual GenTax e-service, which will allow us to see e-filing coming into effect, will be at a cost of TT \$35 million and that will

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roll out over the next 12 to 13 months.

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But important in that project, Mr. Speaker, will actually be the change and project management and communication to the internal and external stakeholders. What this means is that as we roll out those e-services, people themselves, the citizens, will have to be able to understand. We have to communicate so that the change management issues can be addressed.

**9.25 p.m.**

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we are partnering, through the Commonwealth Secretariat, with another Commonwealth country who is leading in this area of e-taxation, e-filing and, therefore, for us to understand the change management issues we will go through at the Inland Revenue Division. This is how transformation takes place, and that is just an example of how we are using the e-government and knowledge-brokering loan to support the transformation at the Ministry of Public Administration.

Business continuity management, Mr. Speaker. As we move ahead, we are ready to start. Last year, I mentioned business continuity management. Sometimes we look at it as in terms of resilient in times of crisis but, more than that, it is about how we work going forward that we always can continue; there is always business continuity. So our processes and systems are reengineered to allow for business continuity.

In this fiscal year, we are ready to start—we have started the project already in this last fiscal year 2014, and we have PricewaterhouseCoopers, their advisory services division. In fact, we are ready to roll out the CM policy.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member for

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San Fernando West and Minister of Public Administration has expired. The question is that the speaking time of the hon. Member for San Fernando West and the Minister of Public Administration be extended by 10 minutes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Hon. C. Seepersad-Bachan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues. The last project I want to speak to here before I turn to my constituency is what we call “The Excellence in Service Delivery—the Diamond Certification Project”. We are taking service delivery to a higher standard. Last year, I spoke to this project. The project actually started in June 2014, and a number of services have participated in our pilot; 34 services to be exact. Twenty-two of these services, in January to March this year, applied to be certified; assessments began earlier this year and were recently completed; 20 services were assessed against the eight criteria which I described.

Let me just remind Members that the Diamond Certification Project itself was developed based on the ease of doing business index, the global competitiveness index, the employee service research findings, and the criteria for certification were actually aligned to those criteria in the competitive index where we are suffering—whether it is in terms of technology, customer service, continuous learning, the areas that we need to make a quantum leap in. So we are encouraging our government services to start practising in that area.

Just to remind you, there were eight categories; eight main criteria, which under them each of them have sub-criteria—whether it is the customer-focused culture; how they engage their customers and staff; how

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easy it is to do business with them; how they deliver on promise to put things right when they go wrong; how they give clear information; be open and accountable through websites; be committed to delivering value for money; continuous improvement and innovation and, most important, about partnership.

Partnership means they get points. They get a lot of points if they could partner with another agency who can help them offer their service. So if I can walk into NALIS and start the process of renewing my driver's licence, they get points for that. If I can pay my parking ticket in NALIS, then I can do so. I am not saying it is happening yet, but this is how we want the partnership, and many of them have started this process.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are getting ready for certification. The first cohort will be certified by the end of—~~not all of them~~. Some of them will not make the certification so they will go back into the second cohort. By the end of October, we will finish the first cohort. We are taking applications for the second cohort. What is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is what I saw in terms of the enthusiasm among public officers who wanted to participate: how many of them willingly participated and wanted to be part of this programme; how many of them on their own initiative were able to achieve.

I want to thank here today—because what we will be seeing going forward is new service charters on the walls of each of these service agencies, and if they pass and they get certified, a diamond logo will go up over their doors, and they will get to wear a pin which says that they are certified. I want to thank today—because it involves an independent

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assessment done by auditors and by an independent assessment panel because, you know, it is not done only by the Ministry of Public Administration. The independent assessment panel is chaired and comprises of members from the private sector. I want to thank Mr. Gary Voss and members of his team for the time they have put into this particular exercise, this particular initiative.

I also want to thank the leaders from the Judiciary, the Chief Justice himself who participated, because the Family Court is one of the services. We have one of the schools participating from the Ministry of Education; the Minister of Health, because the St. James Medical Complex, the Sangre Grande Hospital, the Tobago Scarborough Hospital are also part of it. The Minister of Public Utilities, one of his T&TEC offices is part of it. My own Ministry of Public Administration, the Scholarships Division, is one such service. I am just trying to show you the range, but there are others as well.

Mr. Speaker, just in terms of finishing off this, we will also have what we call the Virtual Call Centre. It would work alongside with what we call the TTconnect face-to-face and it will involve a CRM, a customer relationship management system and a knowledge-based system. All the services that are participating in this certification programme, you must be able to access their services through this call centre.

Most important to this call centre, Mr. Speaker, we refer to it as a Virtual Call Centre because it allows many of them to stay from home and work; whereas some will be in-house, others will be at home. So it allows new job opportunities for the disabled, for the elderly and for those who are stationary at home because of family issues. So that is how we have

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widened the job opportunities for members of the public who cannot get to an office in Port of Spain or any other Ministry.

Just the last part on open government: just to say that open government promotes participation and collaboration between governments and relevant stakeholders. One of the ways that we are doing this—I just want to say Trinidad and Tobago is one of the 64 OGP member countries, the only Caricom member state to have joined the partnership to date, and during fiscal 2014/2015 we expect that open government activities undertaken by the Ministry of Public Administration will include finalization of the Trinidad and Tobago Government action plan; the data classification policy and framework and we will be represented at the Open Government Summit.

Mr. Speaker, together with the data classification on policy and opening up data sets, it will allow for the reuse of data by citizens who can actually develop applications; whether it is an application for your mobile or your app and you actually use those in the public domain. That is how we want to develop ICTs in the sector.

We are also launching what is called the Diamond Buzz Project. The Diamond Buzz Project will involve young people who will get involved in these types of activities.

Mr. Speaker, the last thing I want to go to here is my constituency. I just want to thank the constituents of San Fernando West. I want to thank my staff and just to say that one of the things that we have been able to do—very quickly—is that we are very happy that some of the projects that we have started in the constituency, we have noted that the Waterfront Project

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has finally come to the conceptual design. The consultants are finished with that project. Although, I mean, as citizens, we had come together in San Fernando—the constituents—and we had developed this plan, and finally this will bring some economic activity.

I want to thank the Ministry of Food Production for two projects that were started in aquaponics, and this is where we are able to actually look at fish farming. It was started in La Romaine and on the Train Line. I also want to thank them for the Jumbie Bay Fishermen. They have just rehabilitated that facility which for years has been in that condition.

As well, I also want to say, you know, the Member for Oropouche West spoke about the URP women, and for some time now we have been encouraging many women into the URP Women's Programme for training opportunities. I am glad today that they have equalized the salaries and so on but, very important, we have been encouraging them into how they open their own business activities—how to become entrepreneurial—and I thank NIDCO together with the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago who comes in every so often, and for these women they actually offered computer literacy programmes—I am sorry, financial literacy programmes—so that they will know how to start their business, how to save money on it, et cetera.

One of the things, recently, we also had, in my constituency office, training for many of the leaders of the URP Women's Programme, and I am pleased to say that because of that training programme, Member for Oropouche West, it will now become part of the programme, which I think was badly needed because the women themselves did not have the

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confidence to start the business. I thank the Minister of Works and Infrastructure for the several roads and curb and slipper drains that we have been able to achieve in the constituency.

In addition, we have started an environmental initiative in San Fernando, and I thank the Minister of Arts and Multiculturalism who was able to help us start what we call a regional Carnival, and during that regional Carnival, we were able to launch the Green City of San Fernando, keeping it clean, and we actually deployed recyclable bins donated by a contractor, and we were able to actually—after the Carnival was finished—distribute it to other schools and so on. Today, we are launching the Green City. For the children of San Fernando, we have started the anti-bullying programme. I know my time is up, Mr. Speaker. I thank you and, you know, I thank the constituents of San Fernando West who have me here, and I say thank you to all of you. [*Desk thumping*]

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Housing and Urban Development (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Tuesday, September 16, 2014 at 10.00 a.m. to continue the debate on “An Act to provide for the service of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ending on the 30th day of September, 2015”.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on my legs, may I indicate that it is also the intention of the Government, as discussed with the Chief Whip of the Opposition, that the Government serves notice that on Friday, September 19, 2014 at 10.00 a.m. it is the intention of the Government to debate through all its stages, Bill No. 4 on the Order Paper “An Act to amend the Proceeds of

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Crime Act, Chap. 11:27, the Anti-Terrorism Act, Chap. 12:07 and the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago Act, Chap. 72:01", in the name of the Minister of Finance and the Economy; that is Friday, September 19, 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

So, I beg to move, Mr. Speaker, that this House now adjourn to tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. to continue the debate on the Appropriation Bill. Thank you.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, before putting the question for the adjournment, I have received communication from the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for Siparia, requesting leave of absence from today's sitting. The leave which the Member seeks is granted.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly.*

*Adjourned at 9.37 p.m.*