



Feature Address by:

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HRMATT CONFERENCE: “The Future is Built Today...”

**10th Biennial Conference of the Human Resource
Managers Association of T&T (HRMATT)**

Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre,
Lady Young Road, Port of Spain.

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SALUTATIONS [ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED]

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen...

Let me say what a pleasure it is for me to be here with you today, to share my own views on the future of this profession called Human Resource Management.

Like all of you present here today, I wear multiple hats and play many different roles in my life. Indeed, like all of you here, I am many people in one person. I am a Wife and a Mother. I am an Engineer. I also am a Manager, as well as a Minister of Government and a Member of Parliament. And I am sure that many of you here present, believe exactly as I do, **that the future is built today.**

Almost every day of my life I am involved in policy decisions affecting our entire nation and must reconcile these with the best interests of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I have to make decisions affecting my family and yet try to make these consistent with what is best for all the families of the nation. I have to work with the public officers of my Ministry and yet must be clear on the broader picture — the entire Public Service of our country. I have to analyse our actions not just for success, but also for sustainability. I know something may work, but I must question whether it has the legs and longevity. So when IBM says that:

“The present is the past condition of the future”

...and when I say that the future is built today, we are saying the same thing. And, as I will demonstrate, we are on the same wavelength, the same pathway to progress and are speaking the same language: the language of the future, where the need to have a Vision, a Goal, a Strategy, a Plan and a Purpose is paramount.

Our Goal is Public Service Transformation. The Purpose? To ensure the T&T Public Service can continue to guide this country's development effectively, efficiently and proactively, for the next 50-plus years and beyond. The Plan? The Gold to Diamond G2D Journey (2012 – 2022) — a 10 year transformation and modernisation programme: 2012 being the year of our 50th Anniversary as a Public Service and independent country; 2022, the year of our 60th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) as a Public Service and an independent country. The Programme focuses on improving and enhancing the Public Service's ability to deliver on its mandate to all those who use Government Services.

We know that the Public Service can continue to retard the competitiveness of this country if it refuses to change. We know for a fact that we cannot transform the public service

without transforming the entire country of Trinidad and Tobago. We have created a multiplicity of many-layered Strategies to ensure all the elements of the Plan can be executed: in terms of talent management; compensation philosophy; and the new public service philosophy. We have built flexibility into the Plan to cater for any environmental changes or global shocks which might take place between our present and the year 2022. Something as complex as G2D demands Strategies such as dismantling traditional civil service silos; creating alliances; exploiting the diversity of our people while seeking consensus among them; developing numerous options and alternatives; and most of all, continuous monitoring, review, and evaluation along the way. We are taking an integrated approach to modernisation across the Public Service.

And now for the Vision, itself...

By the year 2022 — if not before! — all Government services must be available anywhere, at any time, and via many different platforms, and at the lowest cost with the highest quality service. There would be the development of citizen-centric Public Service institutions that are strong, flexible, dynamic and responsive to the rapidly-changing demands of the time. They will be results-based, and have the right organizational structure, staffed with the right people to carry out their operations — delivering high quality service efficiently and effectively to citizens and all others who require these services.

The year 2022, this country's Diamond Jubilee, is the journey's end in the sense that, by then, we would have put in place the means, mechanisms and machinery that will achieve excellence in public service delivery, and lay the groundwork for the future of the Public Service in Trinidad and Tobago. 2022 is when past, present and future will merge to create synergistic, successful and sustainable national development.

Who will travel and own this Journey? For G2D, a key success factor is for the newly defined, 21st Century, citizen-centric Public Officer. He / She must own, engineer and execute this Journey. He / She is empowered, and continuous learning is vital to his / her success.

What are the critical competencies for this new Public Officer, if he / she is to be an Agent of Transformation?

Timothy Mack, one of the world's best known futurists, has predicted that more workplace flexibility will be demanded by new, highly skilled workers, even as these workers also will accept the need to work longer, total hours. No longer will "The Workplace" be defined as a government building. Instead, it can be spread over multiple time zones or continents, comprised of workers connecting through a growing range of multimedia ICT channels. A greater premium will be placed on knowledge workers who ask constructive questions concerning an employer's mission, as well as their customers, market values, desired results,

and evolving marketing and business plans. In other words, workers who add value and who deal in data will be essential to that mission, the attendant plans and those desired results.

This is why our G2D Journey involves the change from the existing Pyramid-Shaped / bottom-heavy architecture — a leftover from the colonial period, which saw a tiny elite at the top exercising command and control over a mass of largely unskilled workers at the bottom — to a Diamond-Shaped one, staffed with more technical, professional and management staff at the middle, who are empowered to take real decisions, and are supported by a small core of multi-skilled, customer focused and empowered Management Support Officers at the bottom of the diamond. These middle management professionals will execute the policy directives created by the high level decision makers at the top of the diamond.

Already, we have established a number of the new professional job streams: the new knowledge worker; the new project manager; the new programme managers and the programme management stream in order to drive a results-based environment in a results-based industry. As you are aware, Government is moving away from its annual budgeting process and moving towards results-based budgeting. So we have a whole new range of professionals to help drive this process.

Mr. Mack also predicts that workers and managers will focus more on simplifying workloads, an approach which stresses processes and systems while reducing the risk of missing critical innovation opportunities. Looking at trends in the US, Mr. Mack notes that most of the workforce will be freelance contractors and consultants, many on flexi-time, working from home two-to-three days a week. However, they will be responsible for an increase in productivity of roughly 15% to 20%.

The G2D HRM modernization relies heavily on a horizontal strategy to dismantle the vertical silos within the current civil service structure. I know many of you complain how vertical the Public Service is administratively, and we have to dismantle that.

In short, we are re-engineering the Public Service to ensure Government Ministries, Agencies and Departments functioning in silos and wearing blinkers will become a thing of the past. Therefore, the Diamond-shaped Architecture must be filled with Public Officers who are results oriented and understand the benefits of working in project-driven, cross-functional teams across the Public Service. Exploiting diversity in age, gender, culture, ethnicity and religion among public officers will provide room for growth, renewal, innovation and creativity at all levels of the Service, forming that much needed horizontal platform. We are the most diverse people in the world and research has shown that the greater the diversity of any group of people, the greater the potential for innovative and creative thinking. These collaborative skillsets for the new Public Officer are critical to the paradigm shift we are trying to bring about... Indeed, in

order to usher in emerging concepts such as **Shared Support Services** and **Communities of Practice**...

One of the first high points of this Journey is the **Trinidad and Tobago Diamond Standard** or **TTDS**. Its primary aim is to ensure that all services delivered by Public Service agencies are of the highest possible quality and meet the highest standards of excellence. In fact, 11 such agencies received TTDS Certification earlier this year, and almost 40 of them participated in the first cohort of the programme. Many of them were not certified, but must re-engineer their Service Delivery Plans.

The TTDS Programme is largely a bottom-up strategy, which focuses on Services provided to all our citizens, and not so much on the Ministries of Government. An integrated and collaborative approach will be adopted in terms of delivering these Services, requiring networking and partnering not just with the Private Sector, but with Civil Society and Citizens at large, who have a vested interest in the quality of service delivery. They are our clients and customers; the Services are our products and will be branded as such. Different ministries and agencies will come together support the Service, allowing for flexibility and responsiveness to the changing demands of citizens, and even facilitating the evolution of the given Service as a result. As you know, citizens demand change over time. And as they demand change, contributions by various ministries can vary and grow and transform, all transparent to you, the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed, it will not matter which Ministry delivers the Service in question; our citizens should be able to access Services anywhere, even in cyberspace, and these must be delivered with the same high quality and standard, regardless of a citizen's geographical location. Thus, each Government office becomes that **One-Stop-Shop. No Government door you enter will be the wrong one.**

Apart from technology to support the Programme, it encourages a team-based approach to innovation, creativity and continuous improvement. One of the critical competencies identified and developed for this project is the ability of the Public Officer to partner with stakeholders and actively engage citizens in the re-design and creation of delivery mechanisms for Government Services, thus engendering a networked environment and deepening the participatory process. Every citizen today does not only want to tell you how bad the service is. Our focus groups showed us that citizens want to be part of the process; they want to assist in developing new and improved services.

PWC, formerly Price Waterhouse Coopers, has identified three types of organisations in the future and has classified them as **Blue**, **Green** and **Orange**.

Blue is big business and the large corporations. **Green** is the world of corporate social responsibility and environmental awareness. It is clear that our G2D Journey will create an **Orange** organization, comprising a diverse mix of people. The value proposition for employees

includes flexibility, autonomy and exciting challenges, in return for working on a project basis. The driving goal of this futuristic organization is *“Maximising flexibility while minimising fixed costs...”* In PwC terms we are **Orange**; in fact, a **Golden Orange...**

What is clear from what I have just told you is that a key asset of this futuristic organisation is the Human Resource. In the case of the Public Service, this human resource comprises Public Officers who are:

“Multi-dimensional, customer-oriented, technology-savvy; results-driven and high-performing, can multi-task, works well in teams and demonstrates genuine commitment and loyalty to the organization... is empowered, has a strong sense of task ownership and a desire to lead... In an environment where accountability is a major requirement, He / She will demonstrate personal integrity, particularly when facing difficult ethical dilemmas...”

This key asset of your organisation will continue to evolve and re-define itself in this knowledge-based and technology oriented global economy. The challenge facing today's leaders is how to lead and manage this new type of HR asset.

Do you know how to lead and manage this new type of asset? I want to refer you to an article in the December 2012 edition of the Harvard Business Review, in which they noted that great Human Resource Leaders make great CEOs. For decades, corporate human resource was seen as the back-office / cross-centre focussed on critical administrative tasks such as compensation benefits, plans, etc. Over the last 15 years, though, we have seen a change in this attitude and perspective. Today, the human resource officer is required to focus on high level leadership abilities and strategy implementation skills, and is now becoming a game-changer as the person who enables the business strategy. Indeed, what the research in this article reveals is that the organisational position most similar to that of the chief executive officer is that of the chief human resource officer.

The article recommends that more companies should consider chief human resource officers when looking to fill CEO positions, because they know how to attract the right talent, create the right organisational structure, build the right culture, accelerate and drive the strategy... A CHRO is more likely to succeed at these tasks. So this points to the subset of CHROs who have explored this potential. We have seen too many of our HR practitioners continue to be in a compartment or a box. The CHROs to which this article refers are those who have the potential to lead their organisations. They have broad managerial experience from other disciplines. It is not so much about this particular discipline portfolio. If you are the human resource manager, you have to lead, and if you want to lead this new type of people, then you must have that broad appreciation.

The CHROs referred to must have broad managerial experience. In some companies Executives from other disciplines also can have that human resource management capacity, because if they do come from other disciplines, they must have done a developmental stint in human resource management.

Why is such a developmental stint important? When asked by Harvard Business Review about this, Bernard Fontana, CEO of the Swiss cement company Holcim, indicated:

“Leadership is about transforming an institution, and if you want to have a sustainable transformation, you need to develop leaders who will continue the journey after you. HR is an essential part of that kind of generative leadership... the ability to develop people and generate new leaders...”

Leaders will cultivate new leaders. This is something important for us to appreciate because one of the key issues here is that when you put a specific challenge to human resource leaders, they tend to become very compartmentalised. I have seen human resource managers and practitioners say: “So-and-such is not my business; that is the other department’s business. My department’s business is HR...” That is true, not so? And I wonder sometimes, because we are saying the human resource is the key asset to take us forward in the 21st century. More than any fixed asset you have, this is the one that will transform the organisation. We are looking for those who can communicate the organisational strategy, and I hear HR managers say that’s not for them but for Communications Department to deal with, when I ask them to develop some team building exercises to help staff get together. Notwithstanding the bonding and team effort that you are trying to engender in the system...

The value system we are trying to introduce is so important for this human resource asset going forward. Who will inculcate this new value system? Somebody else? This why the specific challenge for HR leaders is to avoid this tendency to become too compartmentalized, and to develop an appreciation for all the other aspects and dynamics of the companies in which you are employed. What is required today is an HR Manager with a cosmic appreciation of the organisation in which they work, cognisant of the demands placed on the new breed of staff: multi-dimensional people, and who operate in cross-functional teams in those organisations — a strategy designed to enhance the entity’s responsiveness to a rapidly changing global business environment. When we do a strategic plan, do we know how if our key asset — the human resource — can actually implement that strategy? Who is going to determine that? Somebody else?

In a nutshell, you HR managers must be as multi-dimensional as the HR assets you need to manage. You need to have a wider context to operate within this new HR environment which will see assets working in the field, or flexi hours in the office, or from home, communicating and connecting virtually in cyberspace. Do you know how to lead in this new workplace scenario? The research has shown you need to have leadership skills that are more

collaborative. You will be leading and operating in cross-functional teams yourselves. You will need to know how to lead in this new kind of environment. Do you know how to operate in cross-functional teams? Without proper leadership, what happens? They can become a hotbed of chaos. While we are promoting cross-functional teams and diversity, can you imagine when you bring people together in a team, and they all have different technical disciplines? And there also is diversity in terms of age, gender and ethnicity? You need new leadership and management skills to manage even that. If you want such a team to be productive and successful, and deliver on results, and become innovative and creative, you need new leadership and management skills to manage this.

Your multi-dimensional HR asset is oriented to take the initiative and even risks in their jobs because of the demand on them for results delivery. How do you manage your HR assets in those kinds of scenarios? If they challenge you or they challenge leaders or they question everything, how do you manage that? So you need to become this kind of leader.

So... You need to become a new kind of leader, conversant with enlightened and appropriate HR Management principles and strategies, and possessing a whole new cluster of management skills. A different leadership paradigm will need to be embraced, one in which the leader is at the centre of a web managing his/her assets, and not at top of a pyramid, dictating to them. The new HR leader will need to operate with a more facilitator's posture, rather than as a dictator in an authoritarian command and control one.

I can tell you we are trying to introduce this in the Public Service and it is a challenge. People still see structures. When you ask them for project teams, they are still holding on to the hierarchical structures. We need to think outside that box and get rid of these hierarchical structures. Human resource practitioners have a tendency to think only in terms of hierarchical structures.

The new leadership model is more collaborative and open. As the business becomes more horizontal and network based, leaders will need to rely more on inspiration and influence. The new leadership model has the leader at the centre of concentric circles of the universe, flowing out from these circles and business, to the nation, and to the world at large, because your job does not restrict you just to the organisation. You are interacting with / managing people. You possess an asset which improves in value every day. Do you think about this as an asset the way finance people do? Do I continue to invest in the net worth of this asset? How do I maximise the rate of return on this asset?

Allow me to address an issue that was raised earlier this morning with respect to how we must go forward... I'll use the Public Service as a case in point. The issue of Compensation... I am very passionate about this because I know the Public Service is a big issue; compensation is a big issue. We hear it every day.

For example, if you want performance based compensation schemes or rewards based schemes, at the end of the day you have to think outside the box to get value from this asset; and you must ensure that you are rewarding the right behaviours, attitudes and values, if that is what you are trying to achieve. Performance-based Compensation, as it currently obtains, leads to unhealthy competition and a destructive one-upmanship among employees. Values like integrity, honesty and ethics are compromised because of vicious rivalry among employees, which is bad for any business. Given this, we must ask whether we should use these performance-based compensation systems. I believe compensation systems must promote collaboration, reward innovation and creativity born out of diversity, and facilitate continuous learning both at the level of the HR asset and the organisation. In such a system, everyone gets a bonus if the team performs well, and thus, HR assets are motivated to collaborate and develop synergies inherent in teams.

But what do we want from the individual employee? What we want is for them to continue to learn and to develop a continuous learning environment. We want them to continue developing their skillsets and competencies, because we want to move towards a competency-based framework. Indeed, if you want to accelerate the pace of the development of the organisation, it must be on that basis. So why not introduce competency-based pay for the individuals, and performance-based pay for teams. I have been throwing out this idea as our new compensation philosophy and receiving interesting reactions to it. However, this is where the HR practitioner will come forward with a compensation policy. These are the new standards today for business and these are the emerging practices. Remember you have to understand the strategy of your organisation; you have to understand its strategic rewards and objectives. And you must understand that even your own HR practices – emerging as they are, and as modern as they are – must fit with the overall strategies. This is why when we speak to HR practitioners we must state what is expected of them. And that is why there is this need for this overall, leadership approach to this issue of compensation.

Ladies and Gentlemen... The future is in flux and the only certainty is that the workplace environment then would look nothing like it does today, especially since technology — the great transformer — is evolving so rapidly. We need a new Public Officer who, despite the uncertainty, can foresight accurately, nonetheless, and help shape the Service's future. As an HR Leader, do you know how to plan for that uncertain future?

Ask yourselves right now: Do you know what the leadership in the new 21st Century organisation looks like? Do you understand what and whom the new 22nd century leader is trying to lead? Can you, yourselves, work in team-based and cross-functional environments? Do you understand what it would take to increase the value of this new breed of the Human Resource asset? This is what you are being called upon to do in the new workplace paradigm.

In order to accelerate the heavy pace of the new organisation, PwC has produced a report called **Journey to 2022**. The company interviewed 10,000 people in China, India, Germany, the UK and the US to get their views on the future of work and what it means for them. One of the interesting changes over the next seven years is the evolving role of HR. According to the PwC Report:

“Human Resource has been perceived by many as a passive, service-oriented function...With a proactive mindset and focused on business strategy, Human Resource will take on a new and wider people remit, incorporating and influencing many other aspects of the business...”

This is the direction which the futurists have predicted for our HR leaders to go: one in which structures should result from strategies, and not dictate them. If you want to do more than survive; if you want to really thrive in the working world of the future, you have to build that capacity today. Are you ready and up to the task of developing the 22nd century human resource leader who can support this Gold to Diamond Journey? With a proactive mind-set and focused on business strategy, all of you in this room can make this happen.

As I close, I urge you all to join us on our Journey From Gold To Diamond and to help us achieve the Diamond Standard of Excellence in Service Delivery in the whole of Trinidad and Tobago. This way we can transform our country not just for the future but for the better.

I pray that you have a productive and successful conference, as you embrace your new role as human resource leaders of the 21st century.

May God bless our great nation, Trinidad and Tobago...

I THANK YOU, Ladies and Gentlemen...

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