



ADDRESS BY

THE HONOURABLE CAROLYN SEEPERSAD-BACHAN

MINISTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, SAN FERNANDO WEST

AT THE FORMAL OPENING OF SANFEST 2013

CREATIVE ARTS CENTRE

SAN FERNANDO



Ministry of  
Public Administration

## SALUTATIONS

It is indeed a pleasure being here at this evenings prodeeding.

To my cabinet colleague the Honourable Rodger Samuel,  
Minister of National Diversity and Social Integration.

Mr. Terrence Mohammed, Chairman/Executive Festival  
Director

Mr. Winston Bramble, Secretary/ National Junior Arts  
Festival Director

The Representative of the Ministry of Education and

The Representative of the National Gas Company

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a pleasure being here once more at SANFEST 2013. And a special good evening to each and every one of you. As we open the 43rd Annual National Junior Arts Festival and start a two-month long celebration of our cultural creativity and artistic excellence, there is an important lesson in national development here for all of us.

It is not merely in the variety and extremely high standard of the performances we have so far enjoyed over the last 43 years, it is not the age of the performers and their professionalism, it is not even the diversity that is so evident in the programme and the people here this evening, it is that while we call it SANFEST, this is a truly national event.

Over the next few weeks SANFEST will take place in every part of Trinidad and Tobago and young people everywhere, throughout this country, will have the opportunity to participate and to demonstrate their ability to perform at the highest levels.

SANFEST is simultaneously a showcase and an incubator, a stage and a drawing board. It is always a work in progress and a never ending journey in the relentless pursuit of excellence. This year's theme for SANFEST, the ARTS AND CULTURE ESSENTIAL TO LIFE captures the commitment of the organisers and sponsors, the history and development of the Festival and the hopes that we have for the future. It conveys to the young people that their passion for the arts

and culture is socially, morally and spiritually acceptable as well as essential.

It is not accidental that the Festival had its roots in San Fernando and that San Fernando still plays a pivotal role in all aspects of the festival including leadership and direction.

There is no question in my mind that San Fernando is indeed the cultural capital of Trinidad and Tobago. It is the artistic hub and heart of our nation.

Recently, I started a programme in innovation for several Government Ministries and departments as part of transforming the public service into a genuinely citizen-centric organization. What we recognized, and what we are building the programme on, is that the greater the diversity of

an organization or society, the greater the potential for innovation.

The classic example is the period known as the Renaissance or “rebirth”. The Arts and Culture provided the environment that helped to produce Leonardo da Vinci, scientist, artist, genius. He is an example of what can come out of diversity and determination therefore.

Trinidad and Tobago is perhaps the most diverse of all countries and cultures – we have a tremendous diversity of races, religions and regions. We are a melting pot of cultures and a cauldron of cultural activities. San Fernando is the most diverse, the most culturally focused of all the cities of this country.

It is a place where the Arts flourish. It has done so through the work of many people who carry with them the spirit of the Renaissance. In this context I want to pay tribute to a great Southerner and champion of the Arts, Louis Homer.

Louis was my dear friend, but Louie taught us the lesson that those who don't know history are condemned to repeat it. He helped us to understand where we came from and to determine where we are going as a city and as a nation. He led the struggle for the Naparima Bowl and through his work as a journalist helped to show the country the contributions we here in the South are making towards the upliftment of Trinidad and Tobago. Do you recall the discussion here at this hall when we discussed the whole issue of the Naparima

Bowl and I want to pay tribute as I stand right here to the SANFEST 2012 but I want to do it again. I pay tribute to all of you, all the cultural icons here in San Fernando who helped us return Naparima Bowl to what it is today.

My friends, just to indicate that Louie started doing this together with me as we discussed it, and he represented the Member of Parliament through a committee to ensure that Naparima Bowl becomes a heritage site. And I hope that my colleague Mr. Rodger Samuel will continue this work and that we will see it to the entire end.

Were he still around he would have been here tonight and at all the phases of the Festival. Louis truly lived the theme of Arts and Culture as being truly essential to life.



In William Shakespeare play, Hamlet, asked the question, “What is a man, if his chief good and market of his time be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more. Sure he that made us with such large discourse, looking before and after, gave us not that capability and god-like reason to fust in us unused.” This is the point! What good is any of us, man or woman, boy or girl, or youth, if we do not use our gifts of innovation, creativity, performance and invention to explore new worlds and push the envelope of knowledge?

The Natonal Gas Company has demonstrated its commitment to nation-building through its sponsorship of this important festival. It has shown its awareness of the vital role of arts and culture by helping to improve the quality of life of our

country, Trinidad and Tobago. I thank you sir and to your members of the National Gas Company for continuing to stay the course with SANFEST. I also want to thank the Ministry of Education for continuing the support this festival, because they have recognize the importance of arts and culture, the Ministry of Education hold for the Integration of art into the curriculum, continue and will continue into the future.

This is the 43<sup>rd</sup> year of SANFEST. Every year the cycle will continues. The process of exploration, the sense of excitement, the ability to experiment, and the experience of being part of an unparalleled outpouring of art and culture is what SANFEST does for the young participants. They become fully merged with, and immersed in, the annual

cycle of renewal and rebirth that is SANFEST. SANFEST is as impressive as it is important to our national development.

It is for all these reasons we expect SANFEST to take us to greater heights. I take the greatest pleasure in declaring SANFEST 2013 open. I look forward to a true cultural treat and over the next few months. This evening as I say this with the greatest pleasure, I ask god blessing on the participants of SANFEST 2013. I hope Mr. and Mrs. SANFEST 2013 understand that they have to surpass in terms of SANFEST 2012. So I look forward to all the cultural events and for treats over the next few months. And I take pleasure in declaring SANFEST 2013 open.

May god bless each and every one of you and all the organizers of SANFEST.

Thank you and god bless.