



Welcome Address By

Mr. Kenneth Gordon

Chairman, Integrity Commission of Trinidad
and Tobago

on the occasion of the

***Launch of Primary and Secondary
Schools 2014 “Do Right Champions”***

At the
Queen’s Hall, St Ann’s.

Thursday September 25th 2014

Director of Curriculum, Mr. John Roopchan, Teachers, Curriculum Officers,

Good Morning...

I am very pleased to welcome you this morning to the fourth launching of the Annual Do Right Champions Competition. The Commission takes great pride in the significant development which has taken place since this competition was introduced in the year 2010 and more specifically, in the expanding awareness of the message of Integrity amongst the young people of our country. This could not have developed as rapidly as it has without the support of the Ministry of Education and we would like to publicly thank the Minister for his unqualified assistance. Many thanks to the many senior educators who have consented to act as judges and who have been supportive in so many ways.

We are also pleased to advise that we have sought and obtained the formal Agreement of the Teacher and Curriculum Officers for this Do Right Competition and they have all come on board as adjudicators together with Teachers of Primary and Secondary Schools. On October 2 we will engage teachers in Tobago in the first in a series of training sessions for primary and secondary teachers and will be supporting the Ministry of Education with additional workshops for teachers here in Trinidad. Thereafter

Teachers and Curriculum Officers will be visiting schools throughout the nation as part of our caravan to offer information, advice and encourage participation.

These incremental steps have evolved from the Commission's Strategic Plan which recognised that promoting integrity cannot be confined to the monitoring of the Declarations of people in Public Life and investigating complaints of corruption. Integrity must be addressed as a matter of Public Education in the widest sense, for what is really required is a transformation of the eroded values which now exist and ultimately restoring a culture of decency and integrity of which we can be proud. Our youth and the Do Right Champions represent an important step in this dispensation.

The Commission has also acted under the broader umbrella of its mandate to address the problems within our formidable State Enterprises Portfolio. This has resulted not only in recommendations for corrective action to the Arima Borough Corporation and to the Forestry Division but in one instance, to a very positive championing of the new directions pointed by the Commission recommendations; a response which confirmed a willingness to rise to the challenge of lifting the performance bar when new

horizons are made visible a consequence which frequently occurs when one does the right thing.

A series of Integrity awareness Seminars called LEAD ... T & T has also been launched. A concept which promotes the philosophy of leading from above the line and strengthens leadership capacity by increasing the awareness of ethics in decision making. The Commission is collaborating with Dr. Theo Ferguson in developing this concept and it is intended to be a forerunner to the introduction of Codes of Ethics and Ethics Audits in all public bodies.

So that even at a time when Commission's traditional policy making decisions have had to be deferred there is so much that remains to be addressed in developing our Public Awareness Programmes.

Since this will be my final opportunity to share this event with you - for my term of office will shortly expire - permit me to say how pleased I am at the many and varied affirmative responses which have been forthcoming to the Commission's Public Awareness Programmes.

And particularly to the Schools Do Right Championship,

I leave with the confidence that the foundation for promoting integrity has been expanded. The battle for restoring decency and principled behaviour has now been joined by our youth and will be carried shortly to our State Enterprises.

My term has not been without its controversies but it has addressed issues that go beyond Compliance and Investigations. Issues which are equally critical components of Integrity.

In the first year the Commission demonstrated that it was prepared to address its internal weaknesses, get its act together and ensure that it maintained the high standards expected of it even at the cost of going to the Courts to do so.

In the second year the Commission established beyond any possible doubt that it would honour to the letter, the trust and confidence reposed in it in accordance with Section 5 (2) (a) and (c) of the IPLA and act totally independently of anyone's judgment but its own. The total Independence of the Integrity Commission is now a matter of Public Record.

In this the third year we are mobilising on as wide front as possible to enlist support through our Public Awareness Programmes for the fight against corruption and the promotion of Integrity. The Commission's

efforts in this regard will be greatly strengthened with the approval of the amendments to the Integrity in Public Life Act which will shortly be submitted for Parliamentary approval.

So my young friends I have ranged a little further afield in these welcome remarks that I would ordinarily have done. But I have left the specifics about the Competition to my very able fellow Commissioner, Dr. Lalchan, who will shortly be addressing you. I have every confidence that the Do Right Champions Competition will again be an outstanding success that the Commission is now strengthened in its task and thank you all for your support in working to make our country a better place.

September 25, 2014