



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
Ministry of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence

## **FEATURE ADDRESS**

**BY**

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MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE  
ON BEHALF OF SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DOMINIC SMITH  
MINISTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE**

**AT THE**

**AT THE OPERATIONALISATION OF THE LA BREA ICT ACCESS  
CENTRE**

***FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2025***

## **SALUTATIONS**

- Mr. Wayne Nakhid - National Chief Digital Officer
- Mrs. Beverly Williams - Deputy Executive Director, NALIS
- Ms Primate Persad – Director, Public Libraries Division, NALIS
- Ms. Jasmin Simmons - Director, Heritage Library, NALIS
- Ms. Jillon Lewis - Councillor for Brighton/ Vessigny
- Mr. Eldwin Noel - President of the La Brea Village Council
- Mrs. Omadaye Beesan – Acting Director, Community Development Division, Ministry of Culture & Community Development
- Mr. Sean Sooknanan - Manager, La Brea Community Centre
- Members of the Media
- Specially Invited Guests from the La Brea Community

Good morning,

I am honoured to join you today for the **Operationalization of the La Brea ICT Access Centre**. I bring you warm greetings on behalf of the Ministry of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence.

Senator the Honourable Dominic Smith, Minister of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence has asked me to convey his sincere regrets that he is unable to join you today due to urgent matters of national importance requiring his attention at the Ministry of Public Utilities.

It is my honour, as Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence, to deliver the feature address on his behalf for this occasion - the operationalisation of the La Brea ICT Access Centre.

Today, I draw inspiration from a man whose life continues to influence and uplift people around the world. His impact was profound, and his words resonate deeply with the purpose of our gathering here. I believe that the opening of this facility will create a lasting and positive impact on the community of La Brea.

Nelson Mandela once said, *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*

However, in today’s world, that weapon becomes even more powerful when education is combined with access. Our Prime Minister, the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, is a steadfast champion of education. For this Government, access means opening the doors to opportunity, equipping our people with skills, and ensuring that communities have the tools and technology they need to succeed.

That is precisely why we are gathered here this morning. We are not simply opening the doors to a building, we are opening the doors to **possibility**, to **digital empowerment**, and to a **future where every community has the chance to thrive**.

The launch of this ICT Access Centre represents much more than the provision of computers and free Wi-Fi. It represents freedom to learn, to innovate, to connect, and to transform lives. It is the:

- Freedom for a student to complete an online course and become the first in her family to earn a degree.

- Freedom for a young entrepreneur to establish his first business in the digital space, and
- Freedom for a grandparent to access essential government services without standing in long queues under the hot sun.

Just last week, iGovTT, the government-owned company responsible for delivering innovative and impactful ICT solutions across the public sector, launched **Anansi**. Anansi is a groundbreaking platform that unites the knowledge of 32 government ministries, departments, and agencies into one single, intelligent network. Our vision is for every citizen to be able to access this tool, placing valuable information at their fingertips and empowering them to navigate government services with ease and confidence. I am proud to say that any person who uses this access centre can utilise the services of Anansi.

Digital access is no longer a luxury that only a few can afford. With the world moving at a rapid technological pace, digital access has become a lifeline. At the Ministry of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence, we are committed to ensuring that every citizen, whether you are from Port of Spain, San Fernando, La Brea, Palo Seco, Toco, or Tobago, can engage in the digital age with confidence and ease. This commitment is why Access Centres

are so important, because this Government understands that access is a gateway to inclusion, empowerment, and national progress.

Here in La Brea, this space will now serve as a digital hub where community members can:

- Use computers and Wi-Fi at no cost
- Access e-Government services (like Anansi and TTConnect) and submit applications online
- Join online training sessions and workshops to build digital skills
- And most importantly, receive support from professionally trained staff

Let us take a moment to reflect on what this truly means for the people of La Brea and the surrounding communities.

- It means that a young person with a dream no longer has to leave their hometown in search of opportunity.
- It means that a mother can acquire new skills and re-enter the workforce with confidence.

- It means that a retiree can remain connected with loved ones, manage personal affairs, and continue to play an active role in civic life.

We have already witnessed the impact of this initiative in communities across the country, where it has bridged the digital divide and brought people closer together, one centre at a time. With more than 20 ICT Access Centres already in operation, the operationalization of this new facility in La Brea marks another important step toward realising our Ministry's vision of a digitally inclusive Trinidad and Tobago. Our mission remains clear - to ensure that we continue bridging the digital gap and creating equal opportunities for **ALL** citizens.

We are committed to expanding this network and we need the people of La Brea to take ownership of this space, and make it a place where:

- The community thrives
- The youth dream boldly
- The elders stay connected
- And everyone feels seen, supported and skilled

Let this centre be a place where ideas are borne, where skills are sharpened and where futures are built. Let it be a place where you can access technology and unlock your true potential.

To our educators, community leaders and local organisations, I encourage you to partner with us. Bring your programmes, your workshops and your mentorship to ensure that this centre remains part of La Brea's development.

Before I close, let me leave you with the words of another profound and impactful leader Malcolm X who said: *"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today."* Today, we are preparing La Brea for that future.

As we stand on the threshold of our 63rd anniversary of our country's Independence, let us commit to ensuring that this Access Centre in La Brea remains a beacon of hope, inspiration and opportunity for all. Together, we have the power to shape a future that leaves **no one behind**. Thank you and let us continue building that future together.