

ADDRESS BY

THE HON. DIANE SEUKARAN  
MINISTER OF STATE IN  
THE MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY  
OF THE COPYRIGHT ASSOCIATION SOUTH OFFICE

10:00 AM  
WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH, 2005  
COTT's SOUTH BRANCH OFFICE  
129C COFFEE STREET  
SAN FERNANDO

Senator the Hon. Danny Montano,

Minister of Legal Affairs,

His Worship the Mayor Of San Fernando,

Alderman Ian Atherly,

Ms. Allison Demas, CEO of COTT,

Mr. Terence O'Neil Lewis, President of COTT,

Mr. Lutalo Masimba, Vice-President of COTT

TUCO Representatives

Ms Daphne Bartlett,

President of the San Fernando Business Association,

Members of the Music and Entertainment Industry

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning,

- Thank you for inviting me to deliver the feature address at this official opening ceremony of the COTT South Office. Your presence here in my home-town is an important step in the process of establishing your message in major urban areas across the nation, to ensure that our musicians and performers capitalize on their potential income through the licensing of their copyrighted music.

- Your invitation requested that I speak to the issue of “the value of music in the business environment and rewarding... the creators and publishers of music”. Well, the production of music is indeed a serious business in its own right, and its practitioners, producers and manufacturers deserve the same recognition and consideration as industrialists, merchants and investors, especially because their sector makes a significant contribution to the nation’s economy.
  
- As we discuss the topic of copyright and patents, I might add here that in India, the Lower House of Parliament recently passed a measure to restrict the activities of their generic pharmaceutical manufacturing firms, in recognition of the fact that the country has developed its own strength in the research, development and production of first generation pharmaceuticals. This raises the issue for us –how does this impact the artist’s creative output, and will we develop a music sector that has to face such a decision one day?

- The increasing importance of COTT over the last 20 years demonstrates that we as a people are finally beginning to appreciate the commercial value of our local music and entertainment industry, and the need to reward the producers.
  
- Interestingly enough, the United States Commerce Department places music and recording under the category of copyright industries, i.e. those industries which produce copyrighted works as their primary product. This is one of the fastest growing and most complex sectors of their economy, creating more jobs than traditional manufacturing sectors, and it encompasses activities such as software development, publishing, video, photography, cable and many others.
  
- Our local music industry comprises an array of products and services that can be classified under six main areas of economic activity – music production, live performance, manufacture and sale of steel pan instruments, audio-visual production, broadcasting and copyright administration. To date there are some 900 recording artists in Trinidad and Tobago, about 76% of which are soca/calypso performers, with the rest classified under other indigenous genres such as chutney, rapso, parang, pan jazz, gospel, etc.

- Music and indeed the entire entertainment industry, is big business, a perfect union between creativity and commerce. For example, it is estimated that the local industry generated over \$100 million in earnings in 2003. One only has to glance at the revenue generated by the mammoth recording industries of the United States, Europe and Asia to appreciate the profound impact of this sector on national economies worldwide. And globally, cultural industries remain one of the fastest growing components of the world economy, estimated at a value of US\$2.2 trillion in 1999.

- Speaking from my perspective in the Ministry of Trade and Industry, I believe that music and the entertainment industry impact us at a number of levels. First of all, these are serious, competitive business activities, which generate products designed to meet the needs of local and international consumers who are becoming more and more sophisticated, discerning and demanding as time goes by. Then there is the economic aspect, where these activities contribute to our revenue base, GDP, foreign exchange earnings, employment and the overall economic process.
  
- Finally, and perhaps most intangible of all, the music which we produce reflects the soul of our nation, it is a critical aspect of national identity which helps to define our space on this planet, uplifts the spirit and provides us with a profound means of expression.
  
- Culture is value-laden, tied into concepts of nationalism. And in a globalized economy, in order to preserve and promote culture we must be able to market and sell it. If we fail, the dominant economies will do so and they own the technology to accomplish this. This is where the value of copyright comes in, without ensuring that intellectual property is protected, the artists cannot be rewarded and his/her

production is merely an aesthetic exercise, with no tangible reward.

- While most of our economic growth has traditionally been driven by the energy sector, which contributes approximately 60% of our GDP, we recognize that energy resources are non-renewable, and in order to achieve long-term sustainability, the Government has focussed on the diversification of the economy, targeting seven specific sectors for strategic growth and development, under the Prime Minister's Standing Committee on Business Development.
  
- The Ministry of Trade and Industry is the Secretariat for the Industry Teams established to oversee the development plans for these sectors, and it is most fitting that the Music and Entertainment Industry is one of the seven. In fact, the draft strategic plan for this sector was presented at a stakeholders meeting last week to obtain input from the industry players. After their comments are included, the final report will be submitted to Cabinet for action and budgetary approval.

- Today, we live in a brave new world, where we can no longer rely on traditional exports and we realize that Cultural Industries have a profound role to play in our economic growth and development.
- With important core competencies in talent and creativity, small nations such as ours are in a strong position to compete on the global entertainment market, once the appropriate structure and framework are in place.
- When the entertainer's artistic skill is combined with the proper business infrastructure, this fusion forms the core of a successful industry. That is why Government is committed to providing an enabling environment for entertainers to focus on further development of creative skills and artistic output, while maximizing their earnings through a sound intellectual property system, copyright protection and an appropriate supportive commercial infrastructure.
- The entertainment industry worldwide plays a significant role in economic and social development, not only due to its revenue generation and employment capacity, but also due

to the influence of music and entertainment on the attitudes, values and cultural development of a people.

- This process has become even more profound with the continued push of globalisation, the diminishing importance of national and cultural boundaries and the subsequent demand for art forms that carry a universal appeal and transmit the human experience far and wide.
- Across the globe, no serious artist today creates without some thought for tangible, meaningful reward, and every serious entrepreneur expects that this reward will reflect a sound appreciation on the part of the audience/consumer, for the skill and effort required to create the work of art in question.
- Government fully realizes the potential of the music, entertainment and cultural industries to contribute to the economic and indeed spiritual development of our people, and we are working with key operators in the sector to overcome some of the traditional hindrances to sector development.

- In closing, I wish to thank the management and staff of COTT for their ongoing commitment to the protection of the interests of our talented and gifted musicians and artistes and on behalf of my colleagues at the Trade Ministry, the Hon. Ken Valley and the Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds, I wish you continued success in this venture. I thank you.