

Remarks for EMA's Launch of Phase 2 of the iCare Project

Senator the Honourable Haji Kazim Hosein
Minister of Rural Development and Local Government

Wednesday 24th January, 2018

Central Bank, Scarlet Ibis Conference Room, Eric Williams Plaza, Port of Spain

9:30 am – 11:30 am

A very pleasant good morning to all of you.

I am delighted to be a part of the proceedings today for the launch of Phase 2 of the iCare Project. Just yesterday, I met with Ms. Nathai-Gyan and her team to discuss how the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, and the Municipal Corporations can get more involved in this initiative, and help it to spread across the entire country.

We want to bring this project into all communities, especially the rural ones. Because that is where you tend to find a lot of recyclable waste materials. For example, we at the Ministry want to organize a clean-up of the Mayaro beach after Carnival. And there is where you find a lot of bottles, juice packs, food containers... The people in those communities will benefit from this project because it will encourage better habits and clean their area.

What is really needed throughout the country is a cultural shift in the way we deal with garbage disposal and collection. This is why we support the EMA in their drive to put iCare bins in all the Municipal Corporations. Recycling requires collaboration. It requires all stakeholders – local government agencies, private companies, community groups – to get together, with the common goal of keeping the communities clean.

For one thing, we really want to see is these iCare bins being placed in the schools. Because children are the real drivers of the cultural change that needs to happen. They will develop better

habits from early on, and they will take them home and in turn teach their parents and relatives that recycling is the better way to deal with a lot of household waste.

Recently we have seen many cases of illegal dumping – old tyres, bottles, appliances, furniture, plastics... A lot of these things are recyclable materials. And there are proper ways to dispose of them so that they do not cause a public health hazard.

I have been reaching out to the fourteen Mayors and Chairmen to talk with their Public Health Departments and Litter Wardens, and mobilize them to strictly enforce the laws against illegal dumping.

We have seen many videos coming up on social media showing people dumping indiscriminately and I am glad that that is happening. I urge the people taking these videos to keep doing it and putting these law breakers on blast. We see your wrongdoing and we are standing together against you. Every Municipal Corporation is mobilizing their litter wardens to investigate all allegations of illegal dumping and we will find those responsible.

It is high time for us to be more conscious about our cleanliness and our environment. The Ministry of Rural Development is on board to work together with the EMA to drive the national dialogue and jumpstart a recycling culture in Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you.