

■ PM to resign on March 16

Chambers thank Rowley

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BUSINESS groups in the country yesterday acknowledged Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley's contributions and urged the incoming leader to prioritise economic stability, security, and business growth amidst financial challenges.

Rowley announced his resignation yesterday effective March 16.

Minister of Energy Stuart Young will become prime minister when Rowley leaves the position.

The Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services thanked Rowley for his service to T& T as its seventh Prime Minister.

In response to questions from the *Express*, it stated: 'His signal of a departure date of March 16 illustrates how Dr Rowley and his administration executed projects during his two terms; seeing them to completion and leaving on his terms-and this clearly depicts to us all who is the boy from Mason Hall and how he grew up to reach Whitehall,' it stated.

It added that the business community recognises his work in transforming the twin-island Republic.

'We often take for granted these offices and the weight they carry, but his three last acts: his presence at Caricom with other regional leaders; his commissioning of the Central Block of the Port of Spain General Hospital; and thereafter, closing his career back in Tobago with the commissioning of new ANR Robinson Airport illustrate his commitment to both islands. We wish Dr Rowley and his family a happy retirement from service to all of us,' it added.

The T& T Chamber of Industry and Commerce said Rowley's tenure has been marked by steadfast leadership, particularly in navigating the country through complex economic and social challenges.

'As the country prepares for the transition in leadership, we remain committed to engaging with the Government to ensure continued progress in key areas, including economic growth, national security, and strengthening the business environment through effective public-private sector collaboration,' it stated.

It added that the challenges ahead, particularly in addressing crime and fostering economic resilience, require a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

'We look forward to working closely with the incoming leadership to advance policies that enhance national development, economic diversification, and ease of doing business. As the voice of business, we remain steadfast in our advocacy for a stable and prosperous T& T and will continue to champion initiatives that promote sustainable growth and investment in the country,' the Chamber stated.

The American Chamber of Commerce of T& T (AMCHAM T& T) expressed gratitude to Rowley for his service and leadership to the citizens of T& T.

'While we may have had differences in policy perspectives from time to time, and there is much work still to be done, AMCHAM T& T recognises Dr Rowley's pivotal role in navigating the nation through significant challenges and achievements. Notably, he is the first Prime Minister in the nation's history to voluntarily relinquish office, and we commend his commitment to ensuring a smooth and orderly transition of power,' it stated.

It also extended best wishes to him in his future endeavours.

'As the Honourable Stuart Young, Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, prepares to assume the role of Prime Minister, AMCHAM T& T remains committed to working alongside the Government to support a seamless transition and a prosperous future for all citizens,' it stated. The Chaguanas Chamber of Industry and Commerce extended gratitude to Rowley and stated that his decision to step down paved the way for a new era of leadership, and the business community 'keenly anticipates how this transition will shape the economic and social landscape of T& T.

'As the country prepares for this shift, the chamber urges the incoming Prime Minister to prioritise the urgent issues affecting businesses-particularly those in Chaguanas and Central Trinidad. The challenges of crime, foreign exchange shortages, taxation, and infrastructure deficiencies remain critical concerns. It is our expectation that Mr Young's leadership will bring a renewed focus on strengthening economic resilience, enhancing national security, and fostering an environment where businesses can thrive,' it stated in response to the *Express* via WhatsApp.

It added that political transactions can bring both uncertainty and opportunity, but to ensure continued investor confidence, it called for clarity in governance, consistency in policy direction, and open dialogue between government and the business community.

'It is essential that this transition does not lead to delays in addressing pressing economic matters or disruptions in key sectors,' it stated.

The chamber also expressed its readiness to work with Young and his administration to advocate for policies that support business growth, job creation, and national development.

'We wish him success as he assumes this critical leadership role and look forward to engaging constructively with his government in the coming months.

President of the Greater San Fernando Chamber of Commerce Kiran Singh said: 'Dr Rowley has served the country for a very long time and I wish him all the best as he looks to what the future beholds. I think he has made a good choice in Stuart Young who comes from a strong financial and legal background and the country needs that kind of mind and talent,' he said in a WhatsApp response to the *Express*.

Chairman of the Tobago Division of the T& T Chamber of Industry and Commerce Curtis Williams extended appreciation to Rowley for his unwavering support and leadership over the years.

'As the country prepares for a transition in leadership, the Tobago Division welcomes the appointment of Mr Stuart Young as his successor and looks forward to building a strong and productive working relationship with him. The business community remains hopeful that Mr Young's administration will prioritise economic revitalisation in Tobago, particularly at this time when the business sector is experiencing sluggish growth,' he said in response to *Express* enquiries yesterday.

He added that the Chamber stands ready to collaborate with Central Government to implement initiatives that will stimulate business activity, encourage investment, and create opportunities for sustainable economic growth on the island.