

...Business groups welcome new Cabinet appointments

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THE business community yesterday welcomed newly appointed Prime Minister Stuart Young, Finance Minister Vishnu Dhanpaul and National Security Minister Marvin Gonzales, anticipating productive collaboration with them moving forward.

The T & T Chamber of Industry and Commerce noted the new appointments come at a pivotal time for the nation and said it hoped the new leadership would bring renewed energy, a forward-thinking vision and a results-driven approach to national governance.

'Prime Minister Young's track record of decisive leadership and pragmatic problem-solving inspires confidence, particularly in fostering a climate of innovation. We need to support investor confidence and his experience across key ministerial portfolios may bring a new dynamic for advancing sustainable economic development and deepening public-private collaboration,' the Chamber stated in a release yesterday.

The Chamber expressed its encouragement at the appointment of Vishnu Dhanpaul as Minister of Finance.

'His extensive experience in economic policy and public sector transformation will be critical to addressing fiscal challenges, restoring business confidence, and accelerating economic recovery. We look forward to working collaboratively to advance policies that support entrepreneurship, strengthen the ease of doing business, and bolster Trinidad and Tobago's global competitiveness,' it stated.

The Chamber also recognised Camille Robinson-Regis' appointment as Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, which 'will require leadership which will be instrumental in strengthening the legislative framework that underpins justice, accountability, and the rule of law'.

New perspectives

It added that the Ministry of Public Utilities requires a revised strategy and Minister Colm Imbert's appointment may bring new perspectives and provide an opportunity for reform.

'We congratulate new appointees and returning ministers and look forward to our continued collaboration. As the voice of business, the T & T Chamber remains committed to being a constructive partner in shaping a resilient and inclusive economic future. We urge the Government to continue engaging meaningfully with the business community, civil society, and other stakeholders as we collectively work toward national transformation. The T & T Chamber stands ready to support dialogue, provide data-driven insights, and collaborate on initiatives that will create jobs, encourage investment, and improve the quality of life for all citizens,' it added.

Ian Chinapoo, group chief executive officer of Guardian Holdings Ltd, shared brief comments with the *Express* about Dhanpaul at the Hyatt Regency (Trinidad) on Wrightson Road, Port of Spain, where the signing between Massy Holdings Ltd and the Inter-American Development Bank Invest took place yesterday. Chinapoo expressed his anticipation of working with Dhanpaul, noting his expertise in the field. He also described Dhanpaul as a hard-working individual.

Robert Riley, chairman of Massy Holdings Ltd said to the *Express* at the same event, 'We are here for the country and the region and we work with all of the governments to make that happen. Through the NIB as a publicly-listed company, we are owned 20% by the Government and back to the Finance Minister (the Government holds a 20% ownership stake in Massy Holdings),' he said.

The president of the Couva/ Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce Deoraj Mahase said Young has shown resilience in serving Trinidad and Tobago in his many roles. Mahase said he looks forward to Young's continued support for the business community.

Mahase also acknowledged the adjustments in the Cabinet and said he looks forward to the added value and positive impact it will have on the people of T & T.

'It is expected that these adjustments will enhance the efforts of both ministries as they seek to chart the way forward in terms of crime reduction, improvements in revenue generation and managing the economy for the long-term benefit of the country,' said Mahase.

President of the Chaguanas Chamber of Commerce Baldath Maharaj, in extending his congratulations, stressed the need for immediate and decisive action in addressing the pressing issues of crime and economic instability.

Effective crime-fighting strategies needed 'For too long, the issue of national security has been left unaddressed, allowing crime to spiral out of control while detection rates have steadily declined. Businesses and citizens alike have suffered from unchecked criminal activity, which has eroded investor confidence, increased operational costs, and created a general sense of insecurity. The Chamber believes that crime prevention and law enforcement must now be treated as urgent national priorities. We call on Minister Marvin Gonzales to move swiftly in implementing effective crime-fighting strategies, improving detection rates, and restoring trust in the justice system,' he said.