

# Minister: AI a welcomed tool but shouldn't replace workers



Minister of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence Dominic Smith delivers an address at Amcham T&T's 7th Annual Tech Hub Islands Summit, Hyatt Regency. PHOTO BY VASHTI SINGH

Minister of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence (MPAAI) Dominic Smith says artificial intelligence has immense potential to positively shape the public service.

However, he asserted that AI should not replace workers but aid them.

In his address on day two of Amcham T&T's 7th Annual Tech Hub Islands Summit (THIS) 2025 on yesterday, Smith said, "AI holds enormous potential—from predictive healthcare analytics to intelligent traffic systems. But we must proceed wisely, prudent and mindful of the risks: privacy, security, ethics and job displacement.

Our approach is clear: AI should augment, not replace, human capability.

It should enable public servants to focus on high-value, people-centred work.”

He added, “We will support AI innovation hubs and incubators, nurturing home-grown solutions tailored to our unique Caribbean realities and nuances.”

The minister noted that Government needed some buy-in from the private sector, as it attempted to pursue digital transformation in terms of e-government and e-identity platforms, while also being mindful of the lingering threat of cybersecurity.

“In a world defined by digital divides, cybersecurity threats and climate vulnerability, collaboration is essential. As island nations, we are united by common challenges and shared aspirations.

MPAAI is committed to fostering strong partnerships—nationally, regionally and globally. The private sector is a key partner,” Smith said.

Also speaking at the session, Republic Bank Ltd vice president Richard Sammy noted that AI was yet to be fully adapted in the region, but said projections suggested it could have a major impact in the near future.

“In the Caribbean, this shift carries immense potential and urgency.

A 2025 collaborative study by the World Bank and International Labour Organisation, titled *Quantifying the Job Potential of AI in Latin America and the Caribbean*,” indicates that 30 to 40 per cent of jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean are exposed to generative AI, where 8-12 per cent could see immediate productivity gains,” he said.

“This is a clarion call that the influence of emerging and growing technologies is not something for the distant future—it is the reality we must lean into, together.”

He said RBL had been pushing to make the adjustments, stating that the responsibility had gone beyond IT departments.

“The successful execution of digital transformation happens when strategy, talent and technology are aligned. Digital transformation succeeds when we stop treating technology as a support function and start owning it as a strategic advantage,” he said.

The theme for this year’s summit was “Engage. Execute. Evolve.”

Amcham T&T CEO Nirad Tewarie noted in his address that the event featured discussions about AI which were no longer about it coming, but rather the fact that it was already here.