

## Hosein: Govt needs benefit of the doubt



Economist Professor Roger Hosein

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Economist Professor Roger Hosein says policy interventions are needed to propel the economy.

Speaking yesterday on The Morning Brew, Hosein said the policy intervention would identify three variables, which are improving non-energy export revenues, the non-energy fiscal balance, and lowering crime.

The economist noted that the Government has only been in place for the past seven weeks and he said he does not believe they have had enough time to get their act together in terms of pulling the numbers for the various ministries.

“You are hearing all kinds of horrendous stories about mismanagement and corruption in the Auditor General report. I think they will need a full picture to plan. I don’t think anything concrete will really come out in the mid-year review budget tomorrow, until the October budget presentation. And I’m prepared to wait and give them the benefit of the doubt because, from what I know, this country is in a very terrible position,” the economist lamented.

Further, he said this country is among the seven worst in the world in terms of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth from 2015 to 2024.

“The data is there for the world to see. So, I just hope they analyse the facts correctly and thoroughly, put all the data together, and do not hide it from the public. Then try to deal with it in a thorough, comprehensive manner to improve the non-energy fiscal balance, non-energy export revenues, and lower crime,” Hosein explained.

He indicated that he sees a tremendous role for the banking sector in this.

Hosein said he has been raising this with the banking sector, and they seem interested now in supporting and identifying the low-hanging fruit for foreign exchange.

Another issue he raised was that this country never paid attention to remittances and did not pay attention to tourism in the way that the Jamaicans do.

That has come back to haunt this country.

“When we say to save the energy revenues and generate more non-energy export revenues to run the economy, and the politicians don’t take it seriously, well today the economy has crashed. The only way to solve this problem moving forward is to focus on diversification. We hear about Dragon, dragon, that’s good, we take the dragon gas, no disputing that, we go for deep water gas, no disputing that. But those are things that will last us ten, 15 years,” he said.

Hosein explained that T&T needs a bailout in tourism, remittances, and non-energy manufacturing, as well as export activity, including service exports. These are the areas that will provide more long-term, sustainable foreign exchange inflows.