REMARKS BY DR KIM MALLALIEU, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AT THE CHEQUE DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY FOR RECIPIENTS OF TATT BURSARIES, FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 23RD, 2022, TATT'S LIBRARY MEETING ROOM.

- Dr. Naseem Koylass, Vice President Academic Affairs, College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago
- Professor Indar Ramnarine, Deputy Principal, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine
- Professor Prakash Persad, President, The University of Trinidad and Tobago
- Bursary recipients
- TATT Executive officers and managers
- Other distinguished guests, Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to welcome you all to today's event at which bursaries will be distributed to twelve students - four from each of the three universities represented today- College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, and the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

The presentation of bursaries to the selected students is a demonstration of TATT's commitment to the development of Trinidad and Tobago through digital transformation and associated human capacity in the public and private sectors as well as entrepreneurship, according to your career path.

By the time you graduate, digital technologies will be even more an intrinsic part of everyday life for persons of all ages. A little over two years ago, after the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic following the outbreak of Covid 19, the importance of digital technologies became evident. We all experienced the instantaneous transition from in-person transactions, school and work, to almost total reliance on online interactions using digital technologies. As we ascend the current century, we can be certain there will be greater reliance on technologies in all spheres of human life.

Traditionally, students entering university for the first time would experience the thrill of meeting and interacting face to face with their lecturers and fellow students. Assuming all of you started your first year of university in September 2021, you would have met your lecturers and fellow students face to face for the first time just a few weeks ago, at the start of your second year at university. And we are thrilled that you can join us in person today!

For the benefit of students who are not yet aware, TATT was established by the Telecommunications Act and became operational in 2004. TATT is responsible for regulating

Trinidad and Tobago's telecommunications and broadcasting sectors. As a developmental role, this includes the advancement of persons in both sectors. Since its inception, TATT has been involved in a broad range of educational initiatives for persons of varying ages and stages of life. For example:

- This is the second occasion on which TATT has provided bursaries to students pursuing ICT-related courses at COSTAATT, UWI and UTT. In 2012, to commemorate World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, themed "***Women and Girls in ICT"***, TATT provided eight bursaries to female students over two academic years.
- TATT has in the past held hands-on workshops in areas such as graphic design, coding, web design, robotics and cyber safety for students from primary and secondary schools, as well as other young persons at St Jude's Home for girls and orphan homes.
- In 2021 teaching videos were developed to provide students and parents with necessary skills and knowledge to use ICT devices when students were suddenly thrust into attending classes online. Many of these students had to be supervised by parents who were themselves not computer literate.
- TATT held weeklong online workshops in 2021 and 2022, for radio and television journalists. This training set out to upskill journalists and students of mass communication on the demands of radio newsrooms in the digital era.
- Through an initiative titled "***Ensure Digital Literacy in At-Risk Youth"*** TATT has begun to arrange certified training courses for at-risk youth from institutions such as the Youth Training Centre at Golden Grove.

Through these initiatives, TATT plays its part in preparing persons within every sphere of our population, to function comfortably in the rapidly evolving digital environment.

We must keep in mind that technologies cannot of themselves impact development. The human element is key: not only to build the technologies, to programme them, to analyse their use and impact, but also to create rules and regulations to ensure the amplification of gains and the curtailing of harms.

This is where you are essential.

Trinidad and Tobago needs you to propel meaningful, value-centric, digital transformation for our country to achieve its developmental objectives for all our citizens. The TATT bursaries valued $10,000 for two consecutive academic years, depending on academic achievement, are one way that we recognize the importance of your learning and subsequent professional journey to national development. It is our hope that nothing stands in the way of successful and rewarding completion of your programmes of study.

By the time your cohort exits university, 5G will likely be the prevailing mobile communications technology around the world and in Trinidad and Tobago.

Built upon the technologies over the last two to three decades- first to fourth generation networks, 5G is designed to connect people, objects, machines and devices and a whole lot more in unprecedented ways, as highlighted in TATT's "Framework for Fifth Generation (5G) Public Mobile Telecommunications Network" consultative document. The draft Framework was issued for a first round of public consultation just a few months ago. My hope is that most of you would have seen the consultation notice, perused the document and submitted your comments.

If you did not have the opportunity to do so, I encourage you to be on the look out for the second consultative round to add your voice to the formulation of this framework which will guide how 5G is to be utililised by telecommunications service providers in Trinidad and Tobago.

The framework aligns with the specific criteria for 5G as specified by the United Nations agency for information and communications technology, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). These criteria include:

1) enhanced mobile broadband speeds of 100 Mbit/s to facilitate ultra-high-definition content and virtual reality experiences
2) fixed wireless access to facilitate optical fiber-type speeds to homes and businesses using new wider frequency bands, massive multiple-input, multiple-output (MIMO) and 3D beamforming technologies
3) ultra-reliable and low latency communications (URLLC) to facilitate autonomous driving and industrial automation
4) massive machine-type communications, for precision traffic management and much, much more

I urge you to become familiar with the work of TATT and other bodies in this country, such as iGovTT and the Ministry of Digital Transformation, that are responsible for ICT development. Visit our websites, keep track of what is taking place, and use the knowledge you are gaining in your courses of study to weigh in on the 5G Framework and other consultative documents that will govern ICT use and impact in our country.

I assure you that TATT duly documents every comment received on every document issued for consultation. The comments are examined and discussed and tangibly influence the shaping of the documents.

I also want to encourage students to reach beyond the classroom – read widely, keep track of what is taking place locally and internationally. There are many journals and articles published by professional bodies and international organizations online. Ruminate on the information, expand your intellectual horizons, study hard, speak up, engage, aim high. As part of your pursuit of excellence, exercise your right and responsibility to shape the future of our shared country.

In his address to the United Nations General Assembly earlier this week, the UN's Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, outlined the current ills in the earth. He spoke of: "… crises like the

lack of **guardrails** around promising new technologies to heal disease, connect people and expand opportunity." He numbered among his concerns:

"In just the time since I became Secretary-General, a tool has been developed to edit genes. Neurotechnology – connecting technology with the human nervous system – has progressed from idea to proof of concept. Cryptocurrencies and other blockchain technologies are widespread. But across a host of new technologies, there is a forest of red flags. Social media platforms based on a business model that monetizes outrage, anger and negativity are causing untold damage to communities and societies. Hate speech, misinformation and abuse – targeted especially at women and vulnerable groups – are proliferating. Our data is being bought and sold to influence our behaviour – while spyware and surveillance are out of control – all, with no regard for privacy. Artificial intelligence can compromise the integrity of information systems, the media, and indeed democracy itself. Quantum computing could destroy cybersecurity and increase the risk of malfunctions to complex systems. We don't have the beginnings of a global architecture to deal with any of this."

It will fall to you to ensure that there are **guardrails** around technology, that we profit from the good and are protected against the harms. I wish you great joy in a purposeful, purpose-driven learning experience and to welcoming you into the development-focussed ICT sector on your graduation. Know this: we are proud of you.

Representatives of the universities, on behalf of the board, management and staff of TATT, I want to thank you for your diligence and keen interest in allowing these deserving students to access these bursaries.

I thank you.

END