

## MEDIA RELEASE

HOPE for the Creative Sector  
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On Tuesday October 10<sup>th</sup>, members of HOPE's interim National Executive met with representatives of the major sub-segments of the Creative Sector. The date was selected as it is the birthday of National icon, Wayne Berkeley; shi-shi (10-10) is an important day on the Chinese calendar; and October is Calypso History Month.

This was the first of HOPE's 'stakeholder consultation series', which allow the Party to refine its policies based on direct feedback from the many underserved, but, integral groups in T&T. HOPE believes that this was the best group to begin its planning with, as it is proven that the Arts can help bring honesty, opportunity, performance and empowerment to a nation and its people – and we need to re-energise the soul of our nation.

Leading and upcoming practitioners from Animation, Carnival Arts, Fashion, Film, Pan, Performing Arts, Photography, Visual Arts and Writing shared openly their respective needs – all of which have been made known time and again to present and past Administrations.

Based on the discussions held, and the critical importance of the Sector for T&T's, HOPE will issue a working policy position shortly – and invite further input. In the interim, the Party has agreed to receive nominations for a Minister of Arts & Culture, as well as related State Agency boards from the stakeholders themselves – as past appointees were not in keeping with their expectations, and to resource and operationalise a National Arts Council (with Regional arms), as well as to reallocate hundreds of millions of dollars from National Security into education and development of the Arts.

Since the nation's 1972 National Budget, the Creative Sector has been earmarked as a pillar for diversification and several strategic plans have been developed by respective Ministries and State Agencies – including CreativeTT. However, there was consensus that overall, there has been poor implementation of these plans, and even the initiatives undertaken have all been diluted or bastardised, which has resulted in the sector's contraction. Therefore, only a few sector players have made a sustainable career, while most are forced to find alternative employment or make a paucity of a living with one-off opportunities.

HOPE's team, which comprises persons with expertise in national policy development – including the Creative Sector – reviewed the last ten (10) years' National Budgets, and shared the findings with the stakeholders. Many promises made were broken such as in 2016, the Minister of Finance committed that "...artistes, media operators, film-makers and other participants in the creative industries will access first-class facilities to showcase their talent with world-class standards..", yet in this year's presentation, he reintroduced "...performance space upgrades...". It is no wonder that the 1967 Calypso King, Cypher, in his song "Last Election", stated that the politicians' "*manifesto [was] only packed wid' lie...*". HOPE aims to disprove Cypher and hopes one day that a Calypso will sing praises of politicians, who will finally deliver what they promise – when they are able to do so.

## LAST TEN YEARS' NATIONAL BUDGET COMMITMENTS TO THE CREATIVE SECTOR

### **1. 2015 – Empowering our People Through Sustained Economic Growth and Prosperity**

Manufacturing: the creative, arts and entertainment sector which is now in export mode.

- a. We are moving to strengthen these efforts.
- b. To this end, the Government proposes to increase the rebate for the use of local labour, in particular in the film, fashion and music sub-sectors.

### **2. 2016 – Restoring Confidence & Rebuilding Trust: Let us do this Together**

Madam Speaker, we will leverage our rich cultural, historical, religious and natural heritage for developing tourism with associated job creation activity. We will encourage all local cultures.

- a. We will create a national local enterprise with the support of the entire country which will identify the benefits: value creation, income and employment generation, goods and services production, innovation and creativity.
- b. Artistes, media operators, film-makers and other participants in the creative industries will access first-class facilities to showcase their talent with world-class standards.
- c. Arts, fashion design, culture and tourism will become major drivers of productivity and growth in our country.

### **3. 2017 – Shaping a Brighter Future – a Blueprint for Transformation & Growth**

Madam Speaker, PNM Administrations have always supported the development of a vibrant arts and culture sector giving expression to our diverse communities. We recognise that building communities' catalyses national development and that the arts and cultural sector would also be a creator of value, a generator of income and a provider of gainful employment.

- a. Refurb. and construction of community centres
- b. Refurb. cultural institutions (e.g. Naparima)
- c. \$25Mn for A/V for NAPA
- d. National Art Gallery transformation
- e. Rehabilitate mag. 7
- f. Expanding music and cultural camps – learning about heritage and skills

### **4. 2018 – Changing the Paradigm: Putting the Economy on a Sustainable Path**

Madam Speaker, we are stimulating and facilitating the development of our creative industries, in particular music, film and fashion.

- a. Artiste Portfolio Development Programme – export ready through production, marketing and exporting
- b. Live Music District
- c. Strategic Plan for Film; local production crews opportunities; training; PASD;
- d. Return of TTT
- e. Garment production facility

### **5. 2019 – Turnaround**

We have been facilitating the development of a creative industry sector

- a. Live Music Districts – 160 artistes at 31 venues – 340 performances
- b. Year-round music performances

### **6. 2020 – Stability, Strength, Growth**

Carifesta XIV hosted by Trinidad and Tobago underscored the strides we have made in the expansion of our creative industries. Moreover, with the resourceful Film TT and Music TT, we are making efforts to widen and deepen the industry

- a. Trinidad and Tobago is becoming a preferred destination for film production in the region.
- b. Live Music Districts – 58 venues; 537 performances

### **7. 2021 – Resetting the Economy for Growth & Innovation\***

Madam Speaker, the creative and cultural industries are emerging as a critical engine of growth and development. However, the COVID-19 pandemic impact on these industries has been unquestionable. This sector will be among the last to re-open fully. Industry players are undergoing serious hardship, in particular in the fields of music, film, dance and theatre, heritage, literature publishing, festivals and broadcasting.

1. \$5,000 grants
2. Support for artistes, IP
3. Local content guideline for local media
4. Transition creative arts from informal to formal sector
5. Local and foreign training
6. Collecting and publishing local cultural statistics
7. Use of artiste's guild
8. Standards
9. Marketing T&T for film
10. Expand local fashion
11. Improve digital literacy of creatives
12. Increased % of local music on local stations

### **8. 2022 – Resilience in the Face of a Global Pandemic\***

Madam Speaker, tourism and culture contribute significantly to domestic economic activity, and we are taking advantage of the opportunities for synergies among culture, arts and tourism. We are building and expanding our cultural arts. We will monetise these assets through proper marketing and promotion.

1. Upgrade and modernise tourism sites
2. Cultural and performance sites being upgraded
3. KLM
4. New hotel stock
5. Repairing QPS
6. Grants & subventions to CBOs, FBOs, NGOs

### **9. 2023 – Tenacity & Stability in the Face of Global Challenges\***

Encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, and diversification within this combined sector: tourism and creative industries – is undoubtedly enhancing productivity levels and making significant contributions to our growth and development.

1. 50% grant up to \$50,000 for digitalisation
2. 3 hotel brands
3. Marketing cruise tourism
4. Upgrading sites
5. CAL's competitive fares

### **10. 2024 – Building Capacity for Diversification & Growth\***

We consider the tourism and cultural sectors critically important for re-energising and re-invigorating our domestic economy. These sectors are key drivers of our diversification and transformation agenda and for advancing non-energy sector growth.

1. Marketing/Promotions
  2. Performance space upgrades
  3. Tourism Accommodation upgrade
  4. Gov't Loan Guarantee Programme
  5. Hilton upgrade
  6. CAL network upgrade
- \* Tourism & Cultural / Creative & Cultural