



Senator the Honourable Donna Cox
Minister of Social Development and Family Services

Woman Power 2: An Evening of Excellence

Friday March 8, 2024

National Academy for the Performing Arts

SALUTATIONS

Honourable Prime Minister Dr. Keith Christopher Rowley and
Mrs. Rowley

Cabinet and Ministerial Colleagues

Ms. Jacqueline Burgess – Network Coordinator and Officers of
the Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the
Advancement of Women

Awardees

- Brigid Anisette-George - Speaker of the House of
Representatives
- Lynette Seebaran-Suite - Law Association
- Rose-Marie Belle Anotina – Principal of the University of
the West Indies
- Merle Hodge – Lecturer/Writer

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Members of the Media

Entertainers

Good Evening!

Happy International Women's Day!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this year's Women Power. Today, as we celebrate International Women's Day, I want to salute all my sisters, especially those who fix another sister's crown, without having to tell the whole world it was crooked. I see you and I feel you and I appreciate you.

Let me begin by extending my sincerest congratulations to Ms. Jacqueline Burgess and the **Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women** for their unwavering dedication, courage, and service to others. The late Dr. Hazel Browne, your former founder and leader, has left behind a formidable legacy of exemplary community service, which I urge you, not only to continue, but to build upon.

They say when something is nice, you have to do it twice, and this second edition of Women Power, is just that.

Today's event celebrates the remarkable achievements of women across social, economic, cultural, and political spheres, while advocating for gender parity and acknowledging the challenges women still face. We must also celebrate the significant milestones in the ongoing struggle for women's rights and equality.

We live in a country where women are doing far better than our sisters in other parts of the world. We look around and we see our President being female, our Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Industrial Court, and there are many more women occupying pivotal roles in the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago.

My sisters, we have come a long way and there is much to celebrate. At this year's Paris Olympics, for example, there will be an equal number of male and female athletes participating for the first time in history. And although belatedly, the male dominated Cricket West Indies has announced its intention to ensure that female cricketers are paid the same as their male

counterparts. We are making progress, and we will continue to roar.

I salute the men who acknowledges, recognizes and celebrates the role women play in every sphere of society.

Today, I stand on the shoulders of all of those women, who through the ages, have made their voices heard on issues ranging from educational reform to political reform; from equal rights and equal pay for women, to breaking the glass ceiling in the corporate boardrooms across the world. I am indeed humbled.

We are stronger because of their struggles. We are wiser because of their experiences. We are bolder because of their advocacy. We are women.

The theme of our celebration today is **“Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress”**.

At the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, we remain resolute in our commitment to uplifting our most vulnerable women, enabling them to improve their quality of life, unlock their full potential, and achieve entrepreneurial advancement.

This commitment extends through our partnerships with peer agencies, non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups, and community organizations, ensuring that no woman is left behind.

To all the awardees, the movers and shakers in the audience this evening, to those who shout loud, who stand strong, and when needed those who quietly influence others. To those who build empires, move mountains, push boundaries, raise babies, make memories, and refuse to take no for an answer. You are the ladies paving the way for a new generation. Stand tall and stand proud for all that you are. You continue to make a difference in this country.

To all the women in the attendance this evening, *If I was looking for sweetness to put inside a basket, I wouldn't have to look far, for inside here is sweetness that can change this entire country.*

As patron, I look forward to a fantastic event. I know we have a star-studded cast, so I know we will have an enjoyable evening. As I close, let us embrace this evening as a celebration of women's strength, resilience, and achievements. Together, let us continue to champion equality and create a brighter, more inclusive future for all. So ladies, straighten your crown and walk tall.

I thank you.

May God bless you.