



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

CHEVENING RECEPTION

**BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION
PORT-OF-SPAIN**

THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

6:00PM.

It is my distinct pleasure to address you at this Chevening Reception held in recognition of two more of Trinidad and Tobago's exceptionally promising scholars, who are this year's Chevening scholarship recipients: - Environmental Specialist, Mr. Reyad Mohammed and International Tax Policy and Compliance Expert, Mr. Nestor Garcia.

Today, I extend my gratitude to Her Excellency Harriet Cross, British High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago, not only for the invitation, but also for the invaluable opportunity our continued diplomatic relations provide for the advancement of the people in Trinidad and Tobago. The value the Chevening Scholarship Programme adds to the lives of all of the persons who are provided with the opportunity to not only learn academically but also to develop professionally. What I gained cannot be quantified in dollars and cents. I wish to thank your Government for the investment made in my life and the lives of many citizens in this country.

Last year, around this time, I had the honour of attending the 40th Anniversary of the Chevening Scholarship Programme and addressing those in attendance. Our 2023 scholarship recipients were Ms. Sache Alexander-George, who pursued an MSc in Digital Entrepreneurship at Loughborough University, and Mr. Jessel Crispin Brizian, who studied Fashion Business Management at the University of Westminster. I am sure they will say that the year went by swiftly. Time flies when you are studying and having fun. I say, welcome back and welcome home.

To this year's winners, I hope you are ready for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Our country stands at a pivotal moment in its history, poised for transformation and digitalisation in all areas, and you, are now part of this transformative journey. We eagerly anticipate your contributions.

As you are aware, the Chevening Scholarship Programme has been developing global leaders since 1983. It affords recipients to undergo a highly competitive selection process before coming to this final phase of the selection process. The opportunity to pursue postgraduate education is an achievement in itself, and securing a fully or partially funded education abroad is a dream not afforded to many.

Ladies and gentlemen, join me in congratulating Mr. Reyad Mohammed and Mr. Nestor Garcia. You have been granted an extraordinary opportunity having secured these two prestigious spots.

Mr. Reyad Mohammed, I am told you will pursue a MSc in Climate Change at UCL, University College London. Climate change continues to be high on every governments' agenda. Both the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the World Meteorological Organization have reported that 2023 was the hottest year on record.

We've all felt it and continue to experience the tangible effects of climate change. Your post graduate studies in climate change therefore presents you with a unique opportunity to contribute to the overall implementation of climate change policies and actions in our country.

Mr. Nestor Garcia, you too have a crucial role to play in our country's development. Taxes are one of the main source's of any country's revenue, funding critical resources such as the grants and services offered to the poor and vulnerable under the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. Your pursuance will also prove fruitful for including, but not limited to, a favourable tax environment for cross border trade.

As a proud Chevening scholar, I highly value the depth of knowledge sharing I received in my field of study, the opportunity to make lifetime connections with persons who live in different parts of the world and the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom.

I am proud to be a Chevening scholar. I am equally proud of the Chevening scholars who returned to Trinidad and Tobago and I celebrate Mr. Reyad Mohammed and Mr. Nestor Garcia. You are both handpicked to join a group of prestigious leaders and decision makers who create significant impact, helping and empowering people in the countries they reside in. You will be exposed to some of the most experienced scholars in your field. Make use of every opportunity to learn and network. Commit to making a difference when you return. May you succeed academically and as Chevening professionals in your field of study.

On behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and on my own behalf I wish you all God's blessings.

I thank you

May God bless you.