

## Ministerial Speech for OAS RIAL Hemispheric Workshop 3

Nassau, Bahamas – 26 – 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2026

Chairperson of the RIAL/OAS Hemispheric Workshop

Mrs. Pia Takita Glover and my other distinguished Minister Colleagues

Technical Officers and Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning,

1. First of all, allow me from the outset to convey my deepest appreciation to the Government and people of the Bahamas for their gracious hospitality and for extending such a warm welcome to myself and our regional brothers and sisters. I am honoured to represent the Government of Guyana at this particular workshop forum that was strategically organized by the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) in partnership with the Organisation of American States (OAS) to stimulate social dialogue amongst member-states in an effort to promote Just Transition processes towards Green and Blue economies.
2. Today's session on **'Training, Reskilling and Upskilling for Green and Blue Jobs'** facilitates an important discussion surrounding this concept of a Just Transition. It is undeniable that making this transition to a climate-friendly economy is a challenge for every government; especially for developing countries, which are experiencing newfound wealth and exponential growth within traditional energy industries.
3. In Guyana, we have recognised that while our discovery of oil has accelerated national development, expanded infrastructure, and created employment opportunities, it also places on us a profound responsibility. We therefore took it upon ourselves to ensure that this period

of growth does not lock us into a future that is environmentally unsustainable or economically narrow, but instead serves as a foundation to diversify our economy and invest in our people.

4. Despite the challenging global context, our Government's robust policy framework has enabled us in Guyana to demonstrate consistently that economic growth can be strong and steady while simultaneously prioritizing climate sustainability and resilience. Over the last five years, the current Government of Guyana has made a deliberate shift in its approach to business and national development, fostering a more strategic, investment-driven, and innovation-focused economic environment.
5. **Today, I have the pleasure of reporting that the Guyanese economy is estimated to have expanded by 19.3 percent overall in 2025, with expansion of 14.3 percent observed in our non-oil real GDP.**
6. This strong performance in the non-oil economy is particularly important in the context of a **Just Transition**, as it demonstrates that Guyana is building a diversified and resilient economic base to support long-term, sustainable livelihoods.
7. That we experienced growth across agriculture, mining, construction, and the services industry reflects our deliberate efforts to ensure that our development is not dependent on a single sector, but instead creates opportunities across multiple industries. In doing so, we are helping to safeguard workers, expand decent work opportunities, and ensure that our transition toward a low-carbon future is inclusive, equitable, and leaves no one behind. Importantly, this broad-based growth resulted in the creation of over 100,000 new jobs across all sectors between 2020 and 2025 under the current Government administration.

## **LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

8. At the centre of our Just Transition effort lies our **Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030 (LCDS)** which was piloted by our Vice president, His Excellency Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo. Notably, he was recently conferred with the prestigious Sustainable Development Leadership Award for spearheading the **Strategy** and positioning the country as a global leader in forest conservation and climate finance.
9. Needless to say, our **Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS)** essentially promotes economic growth while maintaining forest conservation, reducing emissions, and expanding employment opportunities in low-carbon and climate-resilient sectors, including renewable energy, sustainable forestry, ecosystem services, and nature-based solutions; in clear alignment with the UN's **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
10. The Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) underscores employment creation, **workforce development**, and institutional capacity-building as “key enablers of climate action.”. The Strategy explicitly recognises that climate responses must support livelihoods and strengthen resilience in the world of work.
11. To this end, under the Leadership of President Irfaan Ali, we have sought to make strategic, aggressive and decentralized investments in human capital and skills development in order to tackle our **ongoing labour shortage** and ultimately prepare our people for opportunities in both the green and blue economy. This year alone, **\$2.5 billion** has been allocated in our National Budget for technical and vocational skills training, with **\$723.1 million** going directly to our Board of Industrial Training which falls under the Ministry of Labour to advance the lives of **young people, women, and Persons Living with Disabilities** — ensuring opportunity reaches those who need it most.

12. Permit me therefore to highlight some of the main achievements that were derived from these investments.

## **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Board Of Industrial Training**

13. In pursuance of the objectives highlighted under the LCDS, we have further recognized the increasing importance of an **effective manpower planning policy framework** which is directly linked to skills anticipation. Thus, under the directives of His Excellency, President Dr. Mohammed Irfaan Ali, the mandate of the Ministry was expanded and in so doing is now rebranded in September 2025 as the **Ministry of Labour and Manpower Planning**.

14. This strategic decision reflects our Government's commitment to strengthening policy infrastructure for labour market intelligence, workforce forecasting, and evidence-based planning in light of the rapid changes shaping the future of work. This mandate also extends to strategic planning and analyses for the promotion of jobs in the green and blue economies.

15. Thus, our Board of Industrial Training (BIT), has implemented and will continue to implement targeted training, reskilling, and upskilling initiatives to prepare the national workforce - with priority particularly given to youth and women - for participation in the green and blue economy.

16. Between **2020 and 2025**, BIT implemented a total of **49 green skills training projects**, resulting in the training of **713 individuals**, comprising **527 females and 186 males**. This reflects a strong emphasis on gender inclusion and equitable access to technical and vocational education and training.

17. Priority skills areas addressed during this period included:

- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) installation and repairs, delivered consistently over multiple years;

- Agro-processing technologies and shade house gardening/farming, supporting climate-resilient agriculture and food security;
- Sustainable farming practices, introduced in 2025, which specifically benefited Persons with Disabilities; **AND**
- Electric vehicle (EV) maintenance and repairs and EV charging station installation and maintenance

18. Other Key achievements under BIT include the successful implementation of targeted programmes for women and hinterland communities, notably:

- The training of 78 women from hinterland Regions including Regions 7 and 9 in solar photovoltaic installation and repairs under the Energy Matrix Diversification and Institutional Strengthening of the Department of Energy (EMISDE) Programme, implemented in collaboration with the Guyana Energy Agency (GEA) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in 2022.
- The implementation of a female apprenticeship programme benefiting 20 women (two per administrative region) in Electrical Installation and Basic Solar Photovoltaic Installation, funded by the World Bank under the Caribbean Efficient and Green Buildings Project, with BIT responsible for the **Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** element of the gender-focused implementation component (2025–2027).
- In addition, BIT implemented a Training-of-Trainers programme in 2025 under the Just Energy Transition project, resulting in the upskilling of 22 trainers (17 males and 5 females) in Electric Vehicle (EV) maintenance, solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, and electrical vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. This initiative strengthened national training capacity

and supported the sustainability of green skills delivery. The success of this project is rooted in an inter-ministerial and development-partner collaboration model. The Guyana Ministry of Labour and Manpower Planning through BIT partnered with the Guyana Energy Agency (GEA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the International Organisation for Migrants (IOM), which strengthened curriculum relevance, resourcing, and national alignment.

### **Other Institutions**

19. Also central to our efforts at training, reskilling and upskilling is the establishment of the **Guyana Technical Training College** at Port Mourant, Region Six. This initiative reflects our President's vision to create a premier technical institution that will not only serve Guyana, but the wider Caribbean, through the delivery of internationally accredited programmes and world-class, practical training. By positioning the College as a regional centre of excellence, Guyana is making a deliberate investment in ensuring that our people are equipped with the skills required to participate meaningfully in an evolving global economy; particularly as new opportunities emerge in both traditional energy industries and low-carbon, climate-resilient sectors.
20. Complementing this transformative investment, our Government has introduced the **Government Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) scholarship programme** to provide thousands with opportunities for higher education; established a **STEM initiative** in collaboration with **Exxon Mobil** to strengthen education in science, technology and mathematics across Guyana; and removed tuition fees from government-run technical institutions, as well as from the University of Guyana. Together, these initiatives represent

not only policy decisions but also deliberate, strategic investments in the capacity of our people to meet the evolving demands of a transitioning economy.

## **CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

21. But despite our noteworthy successes, key challenges remain. These include the need to scale training beyond pilot initiatives, strengthen labour market absorption through deeper employer engagement, and address the logistical realities of delivering training to our remote and hinterland communities. Yet, one of the most important lessons we have learned is that a Just Transition cannot be achieved by Government alone; it requires sustained and meaningful collaboration with other ministries, government agencies, private sector, employers and workers.
22. In recognition of this, in April 2025, the Government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Labour & Manpower Planning, in partnership with the International Labour Organization and our national social partners, signed **Guyana's third Decent Work Country Programme for the period 2025 to 2030**. This Programme is fully aligned with our world-renowned Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, and places strong emphasis on the creation of decent work in high-growth and emerging sectors, including the green and blue economies.
23. Through this partnership and many others like it, we are strengthening the foundations of a Just Transition; one that creates opportunity, protects workers, and ensures that Guyana's transformation is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable.

Thank you.