

TTOC AWARDS CEREMONY - 29th December 2021

ADDRESS by the Minister of Sport and Community Development
The Hon. Shamfa Cudjoe

Mr. Brian Lewis, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee and other Committee members,

To all distinguished athletes and sport affiliates,
Members of the media and our viewing audiences,
Good evening.

Tonight, I'm privileged to join the trailblazing Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee and the proud people of this nation as we celebrate our heroes, showcase athletic excellence and show off the power and beauty of sport.

It has been a rough year but tonight we are all here, not only celebrating life but celebrating our accomplishments and our journey. Therefore, it is safe to say, 'we have made it'. Tonight we are in the presence of excellence, surrounded by stars and dwarfed by giants who dared to chase their dreams relentlessly, even against the backdrop of a pandemic.

This evening I pay tribute to the most distinguished awardees and I salute all our athletes. I have seen your exemplary focus and will-power to conquer your respective disciplines. You have overcome many hurdles this year, as you had to devise creative ways to keep fit and stay on top of your game. You had to dig deeper, to find the mental fortitude to continue training and to withstand tremendous psychological stress.

I know that the Olympic Games represented the peak of this kind of pressure but you pushed through. You rose to the occasion, you faced the fire, you gave it your best shot and showed the world the true constitution of courage, commitment, perseverance and grit. You followed your aspirations and dreams despite the many adversities and the myriad of uncertainties. You flew in the face of the universe, revealing the true metal of the red, white and black. On behalf of the Ministry of Sport and Community Development and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend my sincerest congratulations to you, for you have flown our flag high.

You've offered us hope in the midst of these most difficult times and you've demonstrated what it truly means to be a positive force, to have an indomitable spirit, and to possess unconquerable faith.

This year the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee is hosting its 27th annual awards ceremony to celebrate sporting excellence in our country. I am pleased to join the TTOC in keeping hope alive, by doing so virtually. This symbolizes versatility, agility, tenacity and strength; a true reflection of this dynamic organization and a fitting representation of our sporting fraternity. Our athletes have amazed us with their outstanding performances, extraordinary achievements, their commitment to staying the course and their determination to win.

I know that I can safely say that our people, our government, our country and all our well-wishers from far and wide are indeed proud. I tip my hat to the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee as you celebrate your 75th anniversary. Thank you for your unstinting support in honoring our nation's athletes and recognizing their journey to excellence. Your steadfast commitment to our people and to our government is certainly second to none.

I take this opportunity to also acknowledge and pay tribute to the entire sporting fraternity and all our stakeholders in this beautiful ecosystem. The coaches, the administrators, the many arms of the government, sponsors and to you the loyal spectators. Thank you for standing in solidarity with our athletes and contributing to the development of our country through sport. It has been a rough year indeed but we've made it.

We therefore look forward to the New Year, facing the new chapter wiser, stronger, more willing to work, more focused on the fight and more ready to win. Once again I congratulate all winners. I wholeheartedly commend all athletes. I salute the TTOC and I express best wishes to the entire sporting fraternity.

May God bless you. May God richly bless our nation.

Season's greetings to all of you. Thank you.