

Address Given by TTOC President Brian Lewis at the 19th Annual Awards Gala hosted by the TTOC on Thursday 29th December 2016 at Hyatt Regency Hotel- Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Salutations-----.

Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young boy paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can't return to the sea by themselves," the youth replied. "When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water."

The old man replied, "But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I'm afraid you won't really be able to make much of a difference."

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, "It made a difference to that one!"

The Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee (TTOC) continues to evolve as the roles and responsibilities of National Olympic Committees have changed dramatically in recent years.

Rethink. Reimagine. Reshape. Rebrand. Review. Reenergize. Revitalize. Reimagine a new sport organisation that is fit for purpose and relevant to the "CLICK Generation"- A generation that is fast, tech savvy, rooted in digital and expects things on demand. Transformation then is finding the balance between stability and continuous improvement.

For 70 years the TTOC, a non profit, non governmental, volunteer based organisation has afforded tremendously talented Sons and Daughters of this wonderful and passionate twin Island Republic - Trinidad and Tobago to express their God Given talent on the World's biggest sporting stage- the Olympic Games.

In so doing Brand Trinidad and Tobago, our National Flag and National anthem are seen and heard in a most powerful and positive manner to a global audience.

Olympic House has sought to radically transform and evolve into a new and modern sport organisation that is athlete centred, market driven and service based with a relentless focus on transparency, accountability and Good Governance. We have had our failures and made mistakes but we have learned, we have grown, and most importantly we have become better for it.

We have returned money to the Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago.

We have rebranded Team TTO, and courageously laid out an ambitious and aspirational goal of 10 or more Olympic Gold medals by 2024 - A goal that is backed by a 10 Golds24 system of excellence, and a high performance programme inclusive of our athlete welfare and preparation Fund.

We also introduced financial medal bonuses, Good Governance Week and a Good Governance Code. This is in addition to our first SportIndustryTT conference with the forward thinking and solution focused objective of advocating for a billion dollar entrepreneurial oriented SportIndustryTT by the year 2030, athlete career development and brand ambassador programmes, Long Term Athlete development and an athlete welfare and preparation fund.

We have committed ourselves to living in the digital world- living in Beta. We have advocated for greater gender equity and respect for diversity and non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. We also advocate for expedited HDC Housing Consideration for Athletes who have given long and meritorious service to Trinidad and Tobago. To date we haven't succeeded and have made no progress with this housing policy proposal but this is not a deterrent.

Through it all we have embraced dialogue and listened intently. Social media is the new normal and we are empowered and motivated by the success of our deliberate strategy to deepen fan engagement and fan activation. Our efforts to make TeamTTO relevant to T&T society in 2016 has been an awesome, fascinating and at times even frightening one for the TTOC. However, it has been one of significant learning.

As we continue on the Journey to Tokyo 2020 and beyond, 10 Golds2024 and SportIndustryTT2030, we must continue to disrupt and create new normals that meet and exceed the service expectations of our athletes, coaches, affiliates, corporate partners and TTOC stakeholders.

We must stand up and be counted in the fight to protect children from sexual predators; the nightmare unfolding in world sport must be faced. Denial and euphemisms must not be more important than the welfare and protection of vulnerable children from sexual predators. Parents and Guardians must feel that they can trust the decision makers in Sport to protect their children.

We have a responsibility to contribute to creating a sustainable Society within Trinidad and Tobago.

Talented children and youth who want to have hope, who want to believe that they are world class and can achieve greatness must be given the opportunity.

Being poor, underprivileged, unemployed and at risk aren't insurmountable challenges. Nor should being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender. On the issue of women and females in sport the TTOC must be the arrowhead in creating a more empowering environment for women in sport.

The barrel of a gun, corruption and crime, be it white collar or otherwise must not define us.

When we feel overwhelmed and as if we can't cope and the journey seems impossible to complete, we must resist the urge to let our compassion fade. We must stay in the fight.

When the challenge before us seems overwhelming, break the big challenge down into smaller pieces and then take those one at a time– one starfish at a time. Remember to that one starfish, it can make a world of difference.

We can make a world of difference to one child, one athlete, one community, one medal, one day and one hour at a time. A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. United we win, divide we lose.

THANK YOU.

END.