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PRESS RELEASE

Commissioning Ceremony for CERT Speyside Response Centre in Tobago

A Commissioning Ceremony for the CERT Speyside Response Centre which was supported under the Grant Assistance for the Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP) took place on Tuesday October 21, 2025. Approximately \$210,205 US dollars was provided by the Government of Japan towards its construction with the ceremony being held on location which marked the completion of this project. His Excellency Dr. Akima Umezawa, Ambassador to Japan participated in the ceremony and delivered remarks on behalf of the Government of Japan.

Amongst the many participants were the Honourable Farley Augustine, Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly, Mrs. Denese Toby-Quashie, Chief Administrator of the Tobago House of Assembly, Mr. Allan Stewart, Director, Tobago Emergency Management Agency, and various Stakeholders in the community of Speyside.

In his speech, Ambassador Umezawa highlighted that disasters can occur unexpectedly anywhere, and in unprecedented forms, therefore, this centre will play a crucial role in disaster preparedness and response. Ambassador Umezawa commended the decision made by the Chief Secretary and the people of Tobago for their commitment to disaster management. While he hoped that disasters never occur, he firmly expressed his belief that this newly constructed centre, and the dedicated team at TEMA, will be fully prepared and make significant contributions towards disaster relief activities.

The Honourable Farley Augustine began his speech by referencing the 2005 flooding which saw Speyside blocked off and isolated from the rest of Tobago island. He expressed his gratitude to the Government of Japan for their assistance in bringing this project into fruition. He stated that the Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) was now ready for any challenge as this centre would be equipped with the necessary medical and vehicular equipment, as well as the necessary tools for measuring seismic activities.

In his remarks, Director of TEMA, Mr. Allan Stewart gave a brief history on the inception of this project with discussions on the rehabilitation of the original facility beginning in 2016. However, due to its deterioration, the previous facility was condemned as it was no longer fit for purpose. This newly built CERT Centre will serve as the primary base for the Community Emergency Response Team in this area with the construction addressing long standing service gaps such as the reinforcement of localized disaster risk reduction, as well as climate vulnerability risk. Mr. Stewart also expressed his deep gratitude to the Government of Japan for their support.

The Government of Japan is committed to its support of disaster preparedness initiatives and welcomes further opportunities to work in other areas of interest with the Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago, with a view to strengthening the bonds of friendship and mutual understanding which exist between the two countries.



His Excellency Dr. Akima Umezawa, Ambassador to Japan delivers his remarks.



The Honourable Farley Augustine, Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly delivers his remarks.



Mr. Allan Stewart, Director, Tobago Emergency Management Agency delivers his remarks.



His Excellency Dr. Akima Umezawa, Ambassador to Japan and the Honourable Farley Augustine, Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly reveal the commemorative plaque installed on the CERT Speyside Response Centre.



His Excellency Dr. Akima Umezawa, Ambassador to Japan and the Honourable Farley Augustine, Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly perform the ribbon cutting to commemorate the opening of CERT Speyside Response Centre.



Newly constructed CERT Speyside Response Centre.