

Remarks by Ambassador Beatrice Welters

Youth Ambassador Program Send Off

August 27, 2012 Public Affairs Section (PAS) Briar Place, POS

Salutations:

Mr. William Latchman, President, Partners of the Americas Trinidad and Tobago Chapter

Representatives of Civil Society

Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Students

I am happy to be here this afternoon with you; the selected students for the 2012 Partners of the Americas Youth Ambassadors Program; as well as your families, mentors and program coordinators.

The Youth Ambassadors Program is a partnership between the Department of State and Partners of the Americas, aimed at bringing together youth from diverse communities across the Americas to build understanding among countries, increase leadership skills, and create positive change through volunteer service.

As Trinidad and Tobago's first class of Youth Ambassadors, you have lots of responsibilities, to demonstrate to others this is a worthwhile project and something to make communities better.

Be sure to share your culture and values with those you meet so that their first impression of Trinidad and Tobago will be a positive one.

Remember that for many Americans Trinidad and Tobago is little-known, or just clumped together.

So take the time to tell people about the unique cultural mix of this twin island nation and to show America the spirit that makes this country great.

During your time abroad I urge you to use the tools and resources provided by this exchange to realize your potential and strive toward greater personal development.

Take this chance to engage with American government and civic organizations.

To build relationships with your host families and all the young people you meet.

And learn skills that enable and empower you so you can mobilize your communities towards positive change.

And of course bring back what you have learned to your community, your peers and everyone that you work with in your service projects and in the future.

I thank Partners of the Americas for all their hard work in launching this exciting initiative. We look forward to seeing the blossoming of these students and the positive changes of their projects, brought about with this unique and unforgettable experience.

I also want to thank the Embassy staff – Alex, Gabby, Charleen, Jacqui and Alana. In the last year Alex has really built a great Public Affairs Section of the Embassy.

I firmly believe this program will not only buttress the bridges of friendship and cooperation between our two nations, but also help us invest in future generations.

Thank you and please take this opportunity seriously. I have worked with youths for the last 30 years and some take it for granted, they lose out in the end.

If you take it seriously you will see the difference in the lives you meet. Good luck. I am jealous of you. I wish I had this opportunity in my time.

Take it and run with it and thank you again.