



## Girls in ICT Day

Expand Horizons, Change Attitudes  
#WhenIGrowUp | #GirlsinICT |   

### When I Grow Up Girls in ICT 2018 Address Teresa Wankin - Secretary General 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 TATT, Barataria

Good Morning Everyone.

I am extremely proud to bring you brief remarks on today's theme – WHEN I GROW UP.

I will start by reminding everyone that you are great.

You are great because you, like the rest of us woke up this morning and that is fantastic.

When we are born, we are provided with a blank canvas, paint and some brushes - as we grow, we get to mix our colours and paint on our canvas. The **canvas** represents our lives – the brushes and paint represent all the actions we take and the choices we make along the way. The picture we paint is the product of our life.

So, what does the canvas of your life look like right now? You need to spend some time focusing on this and what you want the finished product of your life to look like. It does not matter what your present circumstances are. Once you focus on what you want you will find a way to paint your picture successfully.

No matter how poor, or rich you are, you are equipped with the tools to change your life and create your own finished product. Our tools may be different – the brand name of the paint and brushes may vary but that's fine. Nothing should prevent you from painting the life you want when you grow up. Never allow

anyone to make you believe that your dreams are too big or that you cannot attain the goals you have set for yourself.

“When I grow up”, What will I look like? What will I be like? What do I want to be? These are questions you must ask yourself constantly. You see, young ladies, it is only when you have a finished product in mind, then you will be able to paint the picture you want. Each mark you make on your canvas impacts your future life either negatively or positively.

As a girl growing up in this era, the greatness of your generation is unlimited. Today, at this event, you will hear about the wonderful careers in ICT and the opportunities that we as older women have been given this industry. You will also hear how we have broken down barriers and turned challenges into opportunities while we painted the pictures of our lives. Some of the pictures may have changed along the way, but we are all proud to own our masterpiece. Our job today is to encourage you to paint the best picture for your life without fear – and, if that picture reflects a career in ICT you will make us all very happy.

You have an additional tool for your canvas – and I must say it is the best tool – Information and Communication Technologies – it allows you more opportunities than our generation could have conceptualized. So, use these tools to stay focused on your goals and start creating your own masterpiece.

Paint big, bold pictures like our very own President of Trinidad & Tobago; Her Excellency, Paula-Mae Weekes; or like Oprah Winfrey who started off with a difficult childhood but is now one of the wealthiest women in the world. You can also paint a picture like Veera Bhagan who was born differently abled but is now a fine Attorney-at-Law or like Michelle Lee-Ahye who just won gold for Trinidad & Tobago.

I am sure most of you have never heard of the Granville RC School. It is located all the way down in Cedros – that’s the school I went to – it is where I started to paint my life picture and like most girls who come from rural underserved communities, I had to change my picture several times, I had to borrow a paint brush at times – but I never stopped painting and here I am standing before you as Secretary General of CANTO. I continue to paint today and will never stop painting - as my circumstances and dream changes so too will my picture change.

One of the biggest challenges to obtaining your goals, is to stay focused long enough to see the results. Most of you will feel excited by the events of today – but - the picture of what you want to be when you grow up will begin to fade, as Instagram, Snapchat, and Vevo compete for your time. When this happens, you need your picture more than ever to stay focused.

As I conclude, I want to leave you with three brush strokes to successfully paint your life picture – they are **focus**, **preparation** and **expectation**. **Focus** will give you passion and energy to achieve any goal. **Preparation** will bring you excellent results every time - and - of course **Expectation** will bring you vision and success.

Consider the lotus flower, growing in a muddy swamp. Despite the environment, the plant stays focused on the flower it will produce and protects the bud from the external forces. So too, you need to nurture your goal, keep it safe and etched in your mind until it blooms into your picture.

Stay focused on your goals so you can be anything you want to be *when you grow up!! And never stop painting.*

*Thank you*