



## 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**

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 and as we grow we get to mix our colours and paint on our canvas. This is how we decide what our finished product will look like.

No matter how poor, or rich you are, you are already equipped with the tools to change your life and your finished product. Our tools may be different – the brand name of the paint and brushes may vary but that’s fine. It should not 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.

I want to pause here a bit to talk about our finished product – “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 we have a finished product in mind...a picture, then we can begin to paint our lives on the canvas given to us. 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 through careers in 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 it is our picture and 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 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 ever dream about so paint away ladies. Paint big, bold pictures like our very own Her Excellency, Paula-Mae Weekes, President of Trinidad & Tobago 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 today as Secretary General of CANTO. I continue to paint today and will never stop painting my life picture as my circumstances and dream changes.

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 and the picture of what you want to be when you grow up will begin to fade in a few days as Instagram, Snapchat, Vevo and the other apps compete for your time. When this happens, you need your picture more than ever to motivate you and help you stay on course.

As I conclude, I want to leave you with three keys to successfully painting your life picture – they are **focus**, **preparation** and **expectation**. **Focus** will give you passion and energy to achieve your goal. **Preparation** is what will bring you excellent results and of course **Expectation** is what brings it all together for your future self in the picture of your dreams.

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, keeping 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!!