

**Remarks by the Honourable Dr. Rishad Seecharan
Minister in the Ministry of Health**

38th Caribbean Cardiology Conference

Wednesday July 23, 2025

Hyatt Regency, Trinidad

7:30 pm

Good Evening,

“The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.”

– Sir William Osler

These words by Sir William Osler, one of the founding fathers of modern medicine, serve as a timely reminder as we gather here today, not just to discuss clinical advancements, but to renew our shared commitment to the people and communities we serve.

It is both an honour and a privilege to join you at the opening of the 38th Caribbean Cardiology Conference. On behalf of the Government and people of our nation, I extend a warm welcome to all our distinguished guests, regional, international and local, who have gathered for this critical exchange of knowledge, innovation, and commitment to cardiovascular health.

Let me first commend the Caribbean Cardiac Society for their longstanding dedication to promoting heart health and for creating this valuable space to advance clinical excellence and collaborative action.

As we know, cardiovascular disease remains a leading cause of death globally and in our region. It is responsible for immense suffering, significant healthcare costs and reduced productivity. Yet, it is largely preventable. This simple fact continues to guide our national agenda.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains deeply committed to healthcare reform, particularly in addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, heart disease and diabetes, which are major contributors to increased cardiovascular risk. These are not just medical conditions; they are social, economic and developmental challenges, with significant impact on a person's quality of life.

Therefore, a critical priority is the establishment, full equipping, and operational readiness of catheterization laboratories (cath labs) in major hospitals across the country. These specialised facilities are essential to ensuring that patients experiencing heart attacks and other related issues receive prompt, life-saving

intervention within minutes of first medical contact, as per international guidelines and recommendations. By reducing delays in diagnosis and treatment, the availability of well-functioning cath labs will significantly improve survival rates, minimise long-term cardiac damage, enhance overall cardiovascular care outcomes and decrease morbidity and mortality. Additionally, this investment in infrastructure and human resource will strengthen emergency cardiac care systems, support clinical training and foster more equitable access to advanced cardiac services nationwide.

Partnering for Progress

As we forge ahead, we recognize that progress is never achieved in isolation. Our response to cardiovascular disease and NCDs must be a shared responsibility.

That is why we continue to build strong partnerships. Together, we are working not only to provide clinical care, but also to educate, empower and transform communities; shifting our focus from illness to wellness.

In Closing

This conference, with its theme "*Strengthening Hearts; Empowering Communities*," could not be more fitting. It reminds us that beyond the medical data, beyond the policies and

systems, are people, families, depending on us to do better, be better and care better.

Let us use this platform to strengthen our resolve, foster innovation and deepen collaboration, not just across countries, but also across disciplines and generations.

I thank you once again for the opportunity to share in this moment and wish you a productive and inspiring conference. May we leave here not just informed, but ignited with renewed purpose to build a healthier Caribbean, one heart at a time.

Thank you.