



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Digital Transformation

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Friday May 13, 2022

New Drone for TEMA to aid in Disaster Management and Data Collection

The Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) received an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), from the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), at a ceremony on Friday 13 May, 2022.

The drone will help the Agency in its role as coordinator of emergency and disaster management on the island, but also provide spatial imaging data that can mitigate the damages associated with emergencies and disasters, and be used for other far-reaching applications.

Speaking at the presentation ceremony this morning at the TEMA office in Bacolet Bay, Tobago, Minister of Digital Transformation, Hassel Bacchus emphasised that while the new equipment will go a long way in helping TEMA to carry out its life-saving work, the technology is still merely an enabler. "Technology is merely the mechanism, but when, how and why we use it... it makes a difference. We have to trust human capacity and capability to know what to measure, where to gather the data and what to do with it," he urged.

The ceremony was followed by a demonstration of the drone at the Dwight Yorke Stadium Parade Ground. Receiving the UAV was TEMA's Director, Allan Stewart, Melaura Agbeko, Contingency Planning Officer, and Dalwyn Melville-Westfield, ICT Administrator.

The Honourable Farley Augustine, Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and Ms. Ethlyn John, Chief Administrator, THA, were also on hand at the presentation and the demo, along with a team from the IDB, including Carina Cockburn, Country Representative, Sergio Rios, Chief of Operations, and Dr. Fazal Ali. The Minister of Planning and Development, Penelope Beckles-Robinson, who is also IDB Governor, joined the event virtually.

The drone presented to TEMA is one of two purchased by the Ministry of Digital Transformation under the Strengthened Information Management Project, utilising partial funding from a loan from the IDB to assist in furthering the digital agenda of Trinidad and Tobago. The other UAV has been earmarked for the the Mapping and Surveys Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries.

The UAV at TEMA will be used to provide more accurate reconnaissance and field operations, assess the scale and impact of a disaster, including earthquakes, floods and fires and assist in the safe inspection of infrastructure after a disaster.

Engagement and Behavioural Communications Unit



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Digital Transformation

Both UAVs will be able to capture spatial imaging data that will aid in creating data resources across Trinidad and Tobago. These resources will be managed by the Ministry of Digital Transformation, and can be used in the development of digital solutions and applications.

This data curation, according to Minister Bacchus, is an acknowledgement that “data is the new oil”, as he appealed to the TEMA body to see the value in the data they will collect, not only for saving lives, but for building the country’s digital economy.

###



Photo caption:

*The Minister of Digital Transformation, Sen. the Hon. Hassel Bacchus, presents a new drone to the Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) today. **From l-r:** Minister of Digital Transformation, Hassel Bacchus, Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly, Farley Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago Country Representative, IDB, Carina Cockburn, and Melaura Agbeko, Contingency Planning Officer, TEMA.*

Engagement and Behavioural Communications Unit