Department of Information and Digital Technologies Apprenticeship Programme: The Information Technology Development Programme

Presented by:

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Madam President,

This government recognises the critical role that a robust and skilled Information Technology workforce plays in the future prosperity of Bermuda. In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, the demand for experienced IT professionals is significant, and like many jurisdictions, Bermuda has faced challenges in recruiting and retaining this vital talent. Competition to attract and retain knowledgeable and qualified professionals is fierce; Bermuda competes not only in local circles for this talent but also globally.

Madam President, to proactively address this need and cultivate a pipeline of Bermudian expertise in this crucial sector, I am pleased to announce an exciting new initiative: the Information Technology Development Programme (ITDP). This comprehensive three-year apprenticeship program, led by the Department of Information and Digital Technologies (IDT), is strategically designed to equip

Bermudians with the diverse technical and essential soft skills needed to excel in today's IT environment.

Madam President, the initiative began in February of this year, with two candidates selected with the assistance and guidance of the Department of Workforce Development. A third apprentice was identified in April and brought into the programme immediately.

The ITDP offers apprentices a unique and immersive learning experience. **Madam President,** during the program, each apprentice will complete rotations of at least three months across ten key areas within IDT. This extensive exposure will provide a well-rounded understanding of the multifaceted nature of government IT operations. These core areas include:

- **Service Desk:** Gaining foundational skills in user support and issue resolution.
- **Devices:** Developing expertise in hardware management and maintenance.
- **Networking:** Understanding the architecture and operation of critical network infrastructure.
- **Infrastructure (VMware & iSeries):** Acquiring knowledge in server virtualization and core business systems.
- **Project Management:** Learning the principles and practices of successful IT project delivery.
- **Unified Communications:** Understanding and supporting modern communication technologies.
- **Portals:** Gaining insights into the development and maintenance of online government platforms.
- **Administration:** Developing essential organizational and support skills.
- **Business Services:** Understanding the alignment of IT with broader government objectives.
- **Digital Services:** Exploring the development and delivery of citizen-centric digital solutions.

Madam President, to ensure practical application and reinforce learning, apprentices undertake a capstone project at the end of each rotation. This provides a valuable opportunity for them to demonstrate their acquired knowledge and contribute meaningfully to IDT's ongoing work.

Madam President, the ITDP represents a significant investment in the future of Bermuda and its people. By providing comprehensive training and hands-on experience, we are addressing the immediate need for skilled IT professionals within government and creating pathways for rewarding and sustainable careers for Bermudians.

Madam President, this program underscores this government's commitment to digital transformation and empowering Bermudians to participate fully in the opportunities of the digital age. We are confident that the IT Development Programme will cultivate a new generation of talented IT professionals who will contribute significantly to our public services' efficiency, security, and innovation.

Madam President, please allow me a few minutes to read from participants' submitted testimonies:

From **Kyla** - "My experience working in the department of IDT, and specifically the portal team has been extremely eye-opening. Going into this program as an apprentice, I had a few goals but one stood out more than the others. I was hoping to be exposed to the versatility of working in IT and all the opportunities that it held beyond what I can imagine. I can wholeheartedly say that that goal has been fulfilled, I will be leaving this apprenticeship with more knowledge of my opportunities as well as a far clearer direction of where I want to take my career!"

And from **Armari** - "It has been great to be involved in this program and work in an exciting field with amazing colleagues. The entire IDT staff has been supportive and helpful throughout my entire time here, from the people I've worked closely with to others who I only passed by. I have thoroughly enjoyed the work I have been doing and find this job a perfect fit for me. On top of gaining valuable work experience, I've been learning nonstop about technical and nontechnical work

such as public service and user support. I very much look forward to the coming weeks."

Madam President, we look forward to continuing to recognise the accomplishments of our first cohort of apprentices as they advance through the programme and to welcoming the next cohort in due course. I would like to thank the Acting Chief Information Officer, Ms. Gina Benjamin, and her team for their outstanding efforts in bringing this programme to fruition.

Thank you, **Madam President**