

What the workforce hears when we say



Three uncomfortable truths from a small island port

Michelle Scipio-Hosang

Vice President, Port and Estate Management

National Energy Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited



Three uncomfortable truths from a small island port



This is the seat where workforce meets technology — and the vantage point of what follows.

“ “ WHERE I STAND

National Energy's
Port & Maritime Operations

Sharing insights from **30** years +
managing workforce through **Technological
change**

- Four port facilities at National Energy
**Port of Galeota, Port of Brighton, Savonetta Piers,
ISCOTT Dock**
- Fifteen vessels in the fleet
Towage, marine support, regional operations
- 190 people in this division
**50 directly in the divisional team. ~140 seafarers
across the fleet**



We were asked to address training, reskilling, digital skills, inclusion.

I want to argue we cannot answer that brief well until we examine three assumptions inside it.

01

AI arrives in our ports as an import.

02

Reskilling is an asymmetric bargain.

03

AI widens two gaps at once.



TRUTH · 01

AI ARRIVES IN
OUR PORTS AS
AN IMPORT





TRUTH ONE · THE PATTERN

Three things are almost always true when AI walks into our ports

Trained on

foreign data

Rotterdam · Singapore · Long Beach.

This is not a complaint.

Engineered by

foreign vendors

Europe · North America.

It is a description.

Deployed by

foreign consultants

Who fly in, hand over a dashboard, leave.

Let me show you what it cost us.



What it cost us.

WHAT WE EXPECTED

A European system would solve the problem.

We trained our staff. We integrated it into our processes. We adapted what we needed to adapt.

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

It was designed for a different country and a different governance.

The test data was not ours. The convoluted process steps were not ours. The assumptions were not ours.

WHAT IT COST

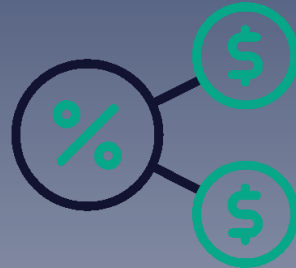
More errors. Bigger backlogs. More human intervention, not less.

The effect reached our customers, not only our staff. Training did not close the gap, because training was not the gap.

**The workforce question is not whether our people can run AI.
It is whether our region can question it before we buy it.**

TRUTH · 02

RESKILLING
CARRIES AN
UNEVEN COST



Who pays. Who benefits.

WHO PAYS



The worker.

Time. Income foregone. The dignity cost of being publicly told their skills are obsolete.

Median case in my fleet:

a 52-year-old able seaman, 30 years at sea, mortgage in Sangre Grande, digital literacy that stops at WhatsApp.

WHO BENEFITS



The port. The shareholder. The customer downstream

In a SIDS labour market the size of a North American suburb, displaced workers **do not bounce.**

They exit the formal economy. They emigrate. The 'transition' is not a transition; it is an off-ramp.

***This is a policy question, not a training question.
It deserves to sit on this Committee's agenda.***

TRUTH · 03

AI WIDENS TWO
GAPS AT ONCE



Two gaps, widening together.

THE REGIONAL GAP

Large ports pull further from small ports.

AI deployment requires capital, data infrastructure, and absorptive capacity.

Honestly stated: AI as currently structured *will widen this gap, not narrow it.*

THE GENDER GAP

The first roles automated are the roles women hold.

Documentation, scheduling, customer interface, administrative processing.

Deploy AI without gender-disaggregated impact assessment and we will quietly *reverse 20 years of progress.*

This is a policy question, not a training question. It deserves to sit on this Committee's agenda.

WHAT THE WORKFORCE ALREADY KNOWS

The data we need is already in our ports.



THE TUG MASTER
knows the
channel

in ways no satellite feed captures.

THE WHARF CLERK
knows the
cargo

in ways no Rotterdam dataset has ever seen.

THE MOORING GANG
knows the
weather

in ways no global model has trained on.

This is not sentimental. It is epistemic — the precise local-adaptation data imported AI lacks.

A hemispheric framework for human-driven AI in ports.



The three requirements the panel's themes need to sit on top of:

- 1. Disclosure of training data origin.** — without it, training programmes train workers to a system that has never seen them.
- 2. Worker-knowledge co-design protocols.** — the inclusion strategy that goes beyond consultation.
- 3. Gender-disaggregated impact assessment of deployments.** — because the first roles automated are typically the roles women hold.



*Human-driven AI begins
with the humans
who already drive our ports.*

Thank you.

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