



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

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For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

ECONOMIC GROWTH PROJECTED FOR 2018

**2017 PERFORMANCE REVISED UPWARDS BASED ON
BETTER THAN EXPECTED GAS PRODUCTION**

The latest data available to the Ministry of Finance indicates that economic growth for Trinidad and Tobago in 2018 is now projected to be between 1.5% and 1.8%. This forecast is consistent with the figures given by Standard and Poors in its latest credit rating update for Trinidad and Tobago.

The estimated economic performance in 2017, that was given in the last budget statement, delivered in October 2017, has also improved now that all of the economic data for the second half of 2017 is in.

The improved performance for 2017 is based on better than expected increases in the production of natural gas. For the last three years, the production of gas in the first half of any given year had generally turned out to be greater than the production of gas in the second half of the year, because production was declining. However, there was a turnaround in the latter half of 2017, with a significant increase in gas production.

In the first half of 2017, gas production averaged 3.24 billion standard cubic feet a day, whereas in the second half of 2017, the average gas production increased to 3.49 billion standard cubic feet per day, an increase of 8% in the second half of the year compared to the first half of the year. In fact, in December 2017, gas production shot up to 3.82 billion standard cubic feet per day and went to 3.91 billion standard cubic feet in January 2018.

As a result, the estimate of -2.6% growth in GDP given in the 2017 Review of the Economy, which was based on gas production from January to June 2017 is now being revised to closer to -1% for 2017, a 50% improvement.

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Regrettably, however, because of inaccurate estimates of gas production given by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries earlier this year, which were transmitted to the IMF, but which bore no relationship to the actual production figures in 2018, the IMF's current projections of economic growth for Trinidad and Tobago are lower. The Ministry of Finance will correct this misinformation in the annual Article 4 consultation with the IMF, which is scheduled to take place within the next two months.

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The Hon. Colm Imbert
Minister of Finance