



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Validation Workshop for the Development of a National Quality Policy

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BUREAU OF STANDARDS

.....
OPENING REMARKS

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PERMANENT SECRETARY (Ag.), MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

.....
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Good morning,

I am pleased to deliver the opening remarks at this Stakeholder Validation Workshop for the Development of a National Quality Policy for Trinidad and Tobago.

As many of you may be aware, our country's Quality infrastructure has its deficiencies. While there are various contributors to our current circumstances, the gaps which exist must be rectified. As the country strives to strengthen the performance of its non-energy sectors our exporters are challenged to perform in an environment similar to their regional and international competitors and strengthening our quality infrastructure can only redound to their benefit and subsequently to ours.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry recognises the importance of having an effective National Quality System. A National Quality Policy is an integral component of a broader National Quality System, and as such, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, alongside the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards continues to champion this important Policy development process.

Only recently, and at a similar forum, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry emphasized the critical role of an effective National Quality System (NQS) in amplifying product competitiveness and enabling innovation; the latter being areas prioritised by the Government in its national development plans captures and articulated in Vision 2030.

The objective of this National Quality Policy (NQP) is to create enabling policy and context to support the comprehensive development of Trinidad and Tobago's National Quality Infrastructure (NQI). The National Quality Infrastructure comprises all public and private institutional frameworks required to establish and implement standardization, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment services. Therefore, it is the role/responsibility of each stakeholder present to ensure that the finalised National Quality Policy creates the desired framework.

We have been extremely fortunate to access over \$250,000 USD in grant funding from the Caribbean Development Bank under the 10th European Development Fund for the development of this National Quality Policy for which we are appreciative. The consulting firm – MESOPARTNER engaged to develop the Policy has since been meeting and interacting with stakeholders, and today, we seek your invaluable contribution by means of validating existing inputs, with the intent of finalizing both the National Quality Policy and an accompanying implementation plan.

The National Quality Policy, which we anticipate will be completed by this month, will impact all sectors of the economy including but not limited to: the health and safety of consumers, environmental protection, social responsibility, sustainable development and national security. Moreover, the Policy will provide exporters with a platform for penetrating markets regionally and globally with high quality, competitive products. The benefits are far reaching.

In closing, permit me to underscore that Policy is ineffective without support for implementation; in this instance, the development and effective operationalisation of the National Quality Policy requires your co-operation. The scope of activities to be implemented require your guidance and comprehensive stakeholder input is essential as we prioritize activities and equally important, establish timelines. We all have a part to play in defining how we introduce and infuse quality in our everyday lives. I urge all present here today to actively participate in this Validation Workshop. This forum is an opportunity to ensure your needs have been adequately captured and addressed in the Policy and that a practical way forward has been identified. The success of this National Quality Policy is dependent on you - our valued stakeholders.

I wish you all a very successful and productive session.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I THANK YOU