



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

Media Release

T&T'S TRADE FACILITATION INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUES ITS TRANSFORMATION

September 28, 2017:- The Government is working towards *“An overall transformation in the way we do things to ensure that we not only improve our international standing, but also create an environment for Trinidad and Tobago to become the Gateway to the Americas and a regional prototype of efficiency and good governance,”* says the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Mr. Norris Herbert at the Inaugural Stakeholder Dialogue on Trade Facilitation on Thursday 28 September, 2017. This undertaking was given one day after the release of the 2017-18 Global Competitiveness Index Report where Trinidad and Tobago has moved up 11 places from 94th to 83rd out of 138 economies.

According to the Permanent Secretary, *“In order to expand and improve our national Single Electronic Window Programme—TTBizLink, the Government has entered into a 5-year loan agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank. This Strengthening the Single Electronic Window for Trade and Business Facilitation Programme will improve both Trinidad and Tobago’s trade performance and enhance its business competitiveness.”*

He highlighted two (2) core areas being impacted by the project. He said *“In the current environment, it is necessary to comprehensively review existing legislation to ensure consistency and conformity with international and regional trade developments. Through this project we intend to introduce harmonised and coherent trade, business, safeguard and anti-dumping laws and other trade related legislation. We will also simplify and modernize major regulatory processes for import, export, transit and business operations in Trinidad and Tobago”.* The second area expanded on was Risk Management. He added that *“An integrated electronic risk management system will ensure efficient trade is actualized and this will*



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involve the participation of Agencies such as Customs and Excise Division of the Ministry of Finance; the Chemistry, Food and Drugs Division of the Ministry of Health; Plant Quarantine Services of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries; and the Bureau of Standards and Trade License Unit of the Ministry of Trade and Industry”.

Mr. Ian Hogg, the project’s Customs and Trade Facilitation Consultant, presented comprehensively on the current port and trade logistics infrastructure and recommendations on a logistics framework for Trinidad and Tobago to improve the country’s trade performance and international competitiveness. Mr. Hogg stated that ***“the success of the recommendations and its implementation is largely dependent on stakeholder engagement, input and cooperation”.***

Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry also addressed stakeholders at the consultation in the afternoon. Referencing the recently hosted Spotlight on Trinidad and Tobago’s Financial Challenges by the Prime Minister Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Minister Gopee-Scoon noted that it was evident that the *“Ease of doing business”* in Trinidad and Tobago must be improved. She said, ***“Reform is absolutely necessary to improve the way we do business. It requires everyone in the public service and private sector at all levels to get involved. There are a number of Ministries and state institutions that affect the final outcome of how we do business and you all have a part to play in this reform”.*** She assured the stakeholders that the outcome will result in improved trade and business facilitation in Trinidad and Tobago.

The session is the first in a series to be facilitated by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to upgrade the country’s Single Electronic Window - TTBizLink and the supporting infrastructure, legislative and governance arrangements with the support of various ministries departments.