



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

# Media Release

## GOPEE-SCOON-‘GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE GROWTH OF LOCAL MANUFACTURERS’

**September 13, 2016:-** Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry delivered an Address at the Welcome Reception hosted for the delegates of the Technical Workshop facilitated by the West Indies Rum and Spirit Producers’ Association (WIRSPA) and Angostura Holdings Limited on Monday 12 September, 2016. In her Address, Senator Gopee-Scoon highlighted that the Caribbean rum industry stands out as the largest agro-based export sector within several CARIFORUM countries with more than US\$300 million dollars being collected annually in tax revenues from this industry in the Caribbean and additionally, rum and spirits producers employ on average 55,000 persons across the region.

Minister Gopee-Scoon reaffirmed the Government’s commitment to supporting the growth of the local manufacturers through expanding market access and facilitating linkages between the local manufacturers and the West Indian diaspora to stimulate penetration of foreign markets. She also acknowledged the support given by the European Union to CARIFORUM countries. One of the issues raised in her address was the Caribbean rum industry’s action on rum subsidies on which she commented ***‘I believe I am now better poised to represent you when these discussions come up’***.

Senator Gopee-Scoon assured the manufacturers that measures are being taken to address the issues raised. She said ***‘the Government is aware of some of the challenges facing the manufacturing sector as they pertain to shortages of skilled labour, obtaining foreign exchange and regulatory issues, among others. I want to assure you that we are working assiduously on short, medium and long-term measures to address all of these’***.



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Mr. Vaughn Renwick, Chief Executive Officer, WIRSPA thanked Angostura Limited for facilitating the Workshop. He said ***'this workshop which brings together a group of diverse producers from the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Suriname with the traditional CARICOM producers will involve learning and sharing of experiences which is how we believe private sector trade organisations should help its members'***

Dr. Rolph Balgobin, Chairman, Angostura Holdings Limited called on the manufactures to build their brands. He said ***'let us make our brands into something the world knows and get them to be part of the popular culture – not just here but everywhere. What we need is the collective imagination and our latent inventiveness to build brands and project them outward in ways that even our largest competitors cannot stop'***

