



# Media Release

## T&T AND VENEZUELA EXPLORE AREAS FOR FURTHER COLLABORATION

**December 15, 2016:-** On Tuesday 13 December, 2016, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry and senior Ministry officials, met with His Excellency Juan Arias, Minister of Basic Industries of Venezuela to address areas in which both countries can further collaborate towards mutually beneficial outcomes in trade and business.

Minister Arias' visit to Trinidad and Tobago resulted from a commitment made during the Official Visit to Venezuela, earlier this month, by Prime Minister Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley where he engaged in wide-ranging discussions with Venezuelan President His Excellency Nicolas Maduro, aimed at deepening the bilateral relationship. The Venezuelan Minister indicated that opportunities for joint collaboration exist in the areas of lumber and the downstream energy sector which would be mutually advantageous. It should be noted that Venezuela currently has 500,000 hectares of pine forestry while Trinidad and Tobago has a developed downstream energy sector.

Minister Gopee-Scoon expressed keen interest in exploring areas for collaboration including the possibility of Trinidad and Tobago serving as a distribution hub, both regionally and internationally, for products emanating from Venezuela. The Ministers undertook to pursue the expansion of trade between both countries through appropriate bilateral cooperation mechanisms. Discussions also took place regarding music and culture. Minister Gopee-Scoon cited the Creative Industries as a sector identified by the Government in its diversification agenda.

Accompanying Minister Arias was Venezuela's Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago Her Excellency Coromoto Godoy Calderón, Mr Jean Urdaneta, President, Maderas Del Orinoco and other Venezuelan Officials.