



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

# *Staff Awards Dinner & Ceremony*

**THE HERBARIUM LTD.**

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R E M A R K S

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE-SCOON  
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

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29 MARCH, 2017

Good evening to you all.

It is truly a pleasure to be invited to celebrate with you at your Dinner and Awards Ceremony. I would like to extend my congratulations to all the hard working awardees who will be recognized this evening for their commitment and dedication to excellence. This, I believe, is attributed to strong leadership and I want to acknowledge Ms. Cheryl Bowles, Founder and Managing Director of The Herbarium Limited (THL) for her vision and pertinacity.

Ms. Bowles has worn many hats over the years and has worked steadfastly towards the attainment of her goals. She is an exceptional role model for all entrepreneurs who are seeking to carve out their niche in this dynamic business atmosphere.

In an interview in September 2005, Ms. Bowles was quoted as saying, “You have to be extremely focused. It is about being able to discern how to be smart in a world that is fast paced.” The continuous expansion and success of The Herbarium Ltd. demonstrates how discerning she has been.

Ms. Bowles also cracked the proverbial glass ceiling in a male dominated business environment. She was the first woman to be hired in a managerial position at Nestlé Trinidad and Tobago Limited, the first female President of the Nestlé Credit Union and then she founded the Herbarium, now internationally known for its Cher-Mère products.

Not only did she grow the business but Ms. Bowles also opened the doors of opportunity for other women who represent ninety-five percent (95%) of the company’s human resource. It is well established that empowering women boosts economic growth, reduces inequality and poverty and raises income. Certainly, Trinidad and Tobago has benefited from your efforts.

Based on the company’s Seven Year International Strategy, The Herbarium Limited was also able to achieve its goal of going global by 2017. With the increased interconnectedness of the global community, THL has not limited itself to the local market but has increased its competitiveness and expanded beyond the shores of Trinidad and Tobago.

THL’s investment in research and development ensures that the company’s cosmetic products meet the standards and requirements of target markets such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. This adherence to international standards and commitment to innovation are worthy of emulation by other local manufacturers as we seek to strengthen our country’s overall competitiveness.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that a company can only be successful if the employees share the vision and are driven to meet the identified objectives. In this regard, I must commend the staff at THL who represent the most important business resource. It is the staff who promote the products and interact face-to-face with the public. The quality service which they provide is a significant asset.

In the same interview mentioned earlier, Ms. Bowles disclosed her secret for employee retention which was to “create an environment where people feel they are valued in terms of what they bring to the table.” If we are here celebrating long-serving staff and top achievers, then Ms. Bowles was indeed correct. The dedication and tireless effort of the team members have positioned this company on the pedestal of success.

With increasing levels of production, THL continues to maintain a high standard of quality, while reducing their carbon footprint and contributing to the environment and the community in which they operate. Cher-Mère’s products are eco-friendly, packaged with recyclable materials and developed through green practices.

Additionally, THL has implemented a Community Give Back Projects programme, which is a hands-on approach for both the development of various communities and the staff, as the latter have the opportunity to select the projects. THL has found the right balance between its daily operations and practising corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Ladies and gentlemen, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) is dedicated to creating an enabling environment to encourage entrepreneurial efforts for the benefit of all industries including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). According to the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, MSMEs contribute approximately twenty eight per cent (28%) to Trinidad and Tobago’s Gross Domestic Product. MSMEs generate employment, increase innovation and engender competitiveness within the economy.

While it may be easy to encourage persons to open a business, the MTI is aware that many of the processes are long and tedious. In this vein, the work of TTBizLink and the Single Electronic Window (SEW) is one way the MTI has sought to assist all businesses in overcoming those challenges. In December, TTBizLink was awarded the Excellence in Electronic Government (excelGOV 2016) Award, for the implementation of business solutions that improve public administration procedures.

These are but a few of the measures being pursued to support businesses in our country and bolster the economy. Nevertheless, the private sector remains as the engine of growth. We are therefore committed to partnering with all stakeholders to further the development of our country. I encourage you to work with us in driving our economy forward.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to reiterate that the Government is ready to pursue new opportunities and markets, and remove unnecessary bureaucracy. All I ask is that you continue to strive to new heights as we work towards the shared goal of improved economic sustainability.

In closing, I want to again express congratulations to all of the awardees on their achievements.

I thank you.