



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

Sod-Turning Ceremony for Nutrimix's Next Generation Hatchery

ADDRESS

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

15TH AUGUST, 2018

A pleasant morning to you all.

It is my distinct pleasure to join you today for this sod-turning ceremony.

Recently a known local economist said to me; "if we fail to innovate and put our "doubles" to the next level someone else would and indeed someone else did. (This is in reference to the many recent social media post which went viral)

Innovation, technology and superior quality ensure that a firm remains relevant and competitive in the market. This aptly describes the Nutrimix Group of Companies given its vision for a state-of-the-art, Next Generation Hatchery. On the flip side, complacency in any industry as in the poultry industry is harmful, resulting in diminishing returns; lack of standards; less jobs provided; less taxes to the government; a drain on our foreign exchange.

This venture is laudable, as the end result will be a thriving local poultry facility and industry of the highest quality standard, providing jobs in particular to our women, increasing the ability to earn foreign exchange through exports and an assurance of well-considered and protected environment within the industry.

Today's event also underscores the importance of single mindedness - the focus and determination to transform a small family business, into a modern hi-tech facility. We welcome this venture and highly commend the Mohammed family on this achievement. This is a substantial venture and we appreciate it.

Investment is the lifeblood of any economy and it signals the inherent commitment and confidence of the private sector in the robustness of the Trinidad and Tobago's economy, and this is despite its more recent challenges.

This investment will bring benefits beyond the Nutrimix Group as it will also strengthen and build capacity in the local poultry industry and the wider manufacturing and agriculture value chains, through collaboration and interaction with suppliers and customers.

According to global reviews and analysis, it is forecast that by 2034 the global population will increase by approximately 33%, averaging just over 8.8 billion people. It is anticipated that the demand for food will increase. Consumption of poultry is expected to outstrip beef, pork and lamb, with outputs climbing to one hundred and thirty (130) billion tons a year. In Trinidad and Tobago, our statistics imitate global trends indicating a growing demand for poultry and poultry products.

The management of the Nutrimix Group of Companies must therefore be applauded for their foresight. Currently, there is substantial reliance on imported poultry and poultry products which in 2017 were one hundred and forty four million TT dollars (TT\$144 million).

Imports of chicken accounted for over ninety per cent (90%) of total imports of poultry. This comprised of nineteen thousand (19,000) tonnes of chicken valued at one hundred twenty two million TT dollars. (TT \$122million). Building capacity in the local poultry industry, will contribute towards the reduction of our exorbitant food import bill.

This state-of-the art facility will be the most modern of its kind in the wider Caribbean. Given the nature of the technology that will be utilized as outlined such as bio-secured controlled ventilation, intelligent chick management systems, and equipment monitoring the entire process from egg to chick, these operations will advance Trinidad and Tobago closer to the 4th Industrial Revolution. Digitization is the language of countries at the forefront in economic prosperity, innovation, competitiveness and development and therefore we are pleased at these approaches.

We are told that the facility is designed to accommodate almost three million eggs (2,939,040). Technology will bring about production efficiencies with an improved quality output. Increased capacity allows for exports of live baby chicks and the opportunity for foreign exchange earnings. Higher up the value chain, there will also be the potential to increase exports of dressed poultry. It is to be noted that this modern hatchery will also be used as a model training facility for tertiary level students studying animal science and agriculture related fields.

As the poultry industry expands however, it is paramount that quality standards are matched and it is in this regard that recommendations are soon to be brought before the Cabinet for the implementation and enforcement of the CARICOM Regional Standards for Poultry and Poultry Products which was approved by the Thirty- Fifth Meeting of the COTED in 2012.

In the main, according to this standard, *“Poultry carcasses and poultry parts shall not be offered for sale if more than 6 months has passed from the date of slaughter except in the case of turkeys, where 12 months is the limit”*. This calls for requirements in sanitations, hygiene, grading, packaging, labelling, marketing and ante and post-mortem inspection of poultry products sold through distribution.

This Next Generation Hatchery is aligned to and will contribute to meeting the objectives of Governments Vision 2030, the country’s National Development Strategy and fits well into the recently articulated National Quality Policy for Trinidad and Tobago.

Allow me at this point to reaffirm the Government’s ongoing commitment to current and prospective investors; to partner, and to provide robust and well-coordinated investment

facilitation. The Government remains unwavering in its intent to attract investors both local and foreign, of all sizes and across diverse sectors particularly as we attempt to reset the economy to a more diversified one, with the non-energy sector assuming more relevance.

There are many incentives provided by the government to assist in the development of new businesses and also to further the expansion of others including:

- A TT Fifty (50) million dollar Business Development Incentive Programme expected to be launched soon;
- A twenty five (\$25) million dollar Grant Fund Facility launched by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in 2017;
- A Research and Development Fund which is not used sufficiently and;
- An increase in EximBank's financial portfolio by a further US fifty five (55) million to provide for trade financing and discounting arrangements to our local export manufacturers.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the midst of the economic recovery, businesses must place themselves in a position to capitalize on available opportunities. A key success factor in this process remains the symbiotic relationship between Government and the private sector. Businesses are urged to take advantage of the series of measures introduced to bolster the manufacturing and agriculture sectors.

The Government understands, and we are actively listening to the needs of the private sector. All our agencies are being improved to facilitate the growth of business.

In closing, I congratulate the Nutrimix Group of Companies on achieving this milestone which will impact fruitfully on Trinidad and Tobago's economic landscape and redound to the benefit of the investors and citizens. I thank you again for the opportunity to share in this significant moment with you and look forward to the return visit for the actual opening of the Next Generation Hatchery, hopefully within record time.

I thank you.