



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

*Fashion Presentation of the
Ultra Bespoke Tailoring
Programme Sartorial Art:
The Renaissance of
Caribbean Bespoke Tailoring*

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FEATURE ADDRESS

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

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MARCH 9, 2019
5:30 p.m.

Salutations

- Deputy British High Commissioner – Ms. Caroline Alcock
- Chairman of MIC Institute of Technology – Professor Clement Imbert
- Chairman of CreativeTT – Mr. Calvin Bijou
- Chairman of FashionTT – Mr. Jason Lindsay
- Principal, Savile Row Academy - Professor Andrew Ramroop
- Chief Executive Officer, MIC Institute of Technology – Mr. Anil Ramnarine and other MIC Managers
- General Manager of FashionTT – Ms. Lisa-Marie Daniel
- Specially invited guests
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to Stollmeyer's Castle. It is indeed a pleasure to be here with you to celebrate this signal event appropriately themed Sartorial Art: The Renaissance of Caribbean Bespoke Tailoring which represents the culmination of a one-year intensive Certificate Programme in Ultra Bespoke Tailoring. Importantly, we are here to celebrate and showcase the accomplishments of Trinidad and Tobago's first cohort of trained Bespoke tailors.

It was with great vision and foresight that this Bespoke Tailoring Programme was introduced aimed at industry development and increasing exports. This is the end game, and it is in sight. Its implementation is timely as there has been steady growth globally in menswear in recent years. In 2016, the global fashion industry was valued at an estimated US \$2.4 trillion and the Euromonitor market research firm forecasts that sales of men's lines will outperform women's between 2017 and 2022. We also note the 2018 study by EY-Parthenon which identified the premium segment as the emergent driver of growth within the global luxury fashion industry. Given the lucrative nature of the market, it is only fitting that Trinidad and Tobago capture a share of this burgeoning segment.

It was in this context that this Ultra Bespoke Programme was hand-picked to equip our local tailors and designers with the requisite skills required to meet and exceed international standards in the international menswear market.

A much welcomed benefit has been that participants have had the advantage of being tutored and trained by a son of the soil and world renowned Master Tailor, Professor Andrew Ramroop, Principal of the Savile Row Academy in London. A recipient of the Chaconia Gold Medal from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in 2005, notably, in 2008, Queen Elizabeth II gave orders for appointment to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire to Professor Ramroop for services to Bespoke Tailoring and Training. I would like to acknowledge the presence of Deputy British High Commissioner, Caroline Alcock, who can attest to the high quality work of Professor Ramroop in London.

Thank you for coming to show support to our local Fashion Industry.

Added to this, the Savile Row Academy Principal has an international reputation for excellence in tailoring skills and holds many other awards, such as:

- Black British Business Person of the Year 2017,
- Trailblazer Award from the Mayor of London,
- Excellence Award from the London Development Agency, and
- Professorship for Distinction in the Field of Tailoring from the University of the Arts, London

Professor Ramroop has conducted several Bespoke Tailoring workshops and courses in Sri Lanka, India, Canada and the United States of America and has amassed customers across the globe. I am quite certain that Professor Ramroop would have shared some trade secrets during this Programme capable of transforming our newly minted artisans into innovative global entrepreneurs.

I am told that the class has already begun using the knowledge acquired from the Programme for the production of bespoke tailored suits and have generated sales in excess of TT\$100,000.00. Graduates of this Programme have developed a unique skills-set which will allow them to

position themselves as highly skilled tailors and entrepreneurs capable of competing internationally. These new skills, once successfully applied, will increase not only the quality of items produced but also add value to the local fashion industry by increasing employment, revenue and foreign exchange earnings. As such, the added development of the industry by these new sartorial talents, will contribute meaningfully to the diversification of the economy.

This Programme continues to demonstrate the strategic focus of the Government of the Trinidad and Tobago through the Ministry of Trade and Industry and its agencies in creating the enabling environment for businesses to grow and develop particularly in the creative sector which represents a tangible, real and effective means of diversification.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and its agencies continue to work tirelessly to create that environment where support is given to innovation, entrepreneurship and 'Building Globally Competitive Businesses'- a key theme of the National Development Strategy 2016 – 2030 commonly referred to as Vision 2030.

I especially want to thank the Minister of Education - the Honourable Anthony Garcia, the Ministry of Education and its agencies - the MIC Institute of Technology and the National Training Agency. Without their invaluable support and collaboration, this programme would not have been the success that it is.

Also, I wish to recognize the work of our state agency FashionTT and the parent company CreativeTT in coordinating the Programme with the MIC Institute of Technology and the Savile Row Academy.

While CreativeTT/FashionTT managed the undertakings of the Programme and Savile Row Academy was the main facilitator, the MIC Institute of Technology provided training in vital areas such as entrepreneurship, business management, textile science and life skills, among others, to better equip the students for the business world, in particular. I am certain the attempts all put together, will leave an indelible mark on the local fashion industry.

To the participants who took advantage of this unique opportunity to harness their skills and improve their craft, you are further challenged to lead and add value to the fashion industry. Your overwhelming response to the initial offering was the impetus for its expansion and the incorporation of a part time component for those unable to commit to classes full time. This country is producing world class tailors and designers and you are therefore expected to expand the sector even further with the assimilation of these new skills.

This Programme is interwoven with the gamut of other complementary initiatives being managed by FashionTT, one such being the Fashion Value Chain Investment Programme which CreativeTT Chairman spoke of today.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the invaluable partnership between the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) and FashionTT in the implementation of the the Fashion Value Chain Investment Programme.

In an effort to assist with financing, the Export Grant Facility and the enhanced Research and Development Fund are available to small and medium sized manufacturers. Successful graduates of the Bespoke Tailoring course can also take advantage of these opportunities. The Export Grant provides financing up to a maximum of \$250,000 for machinery and equipment for production of export oriented items, including the manufacturing of leather and craft products, textile, garments, footwear and headwear.

The Research and Development Facility provides tiered funding for the successful market entry of innovative, technology driven business ideas in the creative and other sectors up to a maximum of \$1 million per beneficiary.

These two resources can assist immensely in ensuring that our creatives innovate and export which are two major objectives of the State's continued investment in the sector.

As I close, I wish to add that this event of sartorial art-elegance in menswear truly represents a turning point in the local fashion industry. It demonstrates, in the most tangible way possible, the output of the recently concluded Certificate Programme in Ultra Bespoke Tailoring. It illustrates modern and classic designs in menswear created with impeccable skill and craftsmanship by our very own. Further, it creates a unique opportunity for the participants to have business-to-business meetings and establish connections which may not be possible in a different time and space. Today marks the first step towards your future exports.

I applaud you all for being part of this signature event and appreciate the novel Bespoke Tailoring Showcase to which we have been treated thus far.

I look forward to the live performances and to viewing the exhibition of Savile Row Academy's most accomplished graduates from Trinidad and Tobago. May you go from strength to strength. Congratulations to all of you.

I thank you.