



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

# Media Release

## TRADE MINISTRY PARTNERS WITH WTO AND UWI TO BUILD REGIONAL TRADE PROFESSIONALS' CAPACITY

**June 3 2019:-** Technocrats of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and their peers in the region, are enhancing their capabilities and understanding of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), its agreements rules and procedures and relevant trade issues through participation in the WTOs Regional Trade Policy Course (RTPC). Trinidad and Tobago's inaugural two month programme is the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the University of the West Indies and the WTO. The programme which officially commenced today, Monday 3rd June, 2019, at the University of the West Indies Campus will benefit WTO regional members and observers.

Mr. Norris Herbert, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry in addressing the participants at the Opening Ceremony described the commencement of the RTPC as truly a progressive step in the augmentation of capacity of trade professionals in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean in general. Noting the benefit of the programme to Trinidad and Tobago Mr Herbert said ***"the Ministry of Trade and Industry views this programme as vital to facilitating the expansion of skillsets necessary to boost local and regional competence in key WTO areas and the multilateral trading system. Several technical officers have gained critical knowledge and contributed positively to T&T's conduct of work under the WTO"***

Mr. Herbert told participants as representatives of small developing countries that their involvement in future activities of the WTO will be of tremendous importance and the knowledge gained will serve to add value to fulfilling their country's role to the WTO and by extension the region.



Mr Roberto Foirentino, Counsellor, Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) at the WTO noted that the commencement of the RTPC was at a crucial moment for global trade, at a time when new technologies are set to revolutionise trading patterns and practices. He said **“this programme serves multiple objectives aimed at building capacity by deepening Government officials’ understanding of trade policy issues by strengthening their ability to undertake the WTO work”**. He added that the programme places specific focus on the regional trade policy context and the linkages between the regions and the WTO through participation of regional academics.

Professor John Agard, Director, Office of Research Development and Knowledge Transfer, UWI described the WTO’s relationship with the University as symbiotic and very important. He said **“the combining of the expertise of the WTO and UWI will ensure that the training is comprehensive and adapted to our needs. It is in this way the WTO reinforces linkages with the academic community as a part of an integrated approach to sustainable capacity building.”**

Professor Jessica Byron, Director, Institute of International Relations, UWI in welcoming the participants noted that **“the WTO’s investment in building trade policy capacity in our region is all the more timely, given our own processes of economic restructuring”**. She indicated that the programme is an important part of the mandate of the Institute of International Relations to engage in such outreach and professional training in areas that are key to the development of the Caribbean region.

Twenty-two (22) trade professionals representing countries such as Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago will participate in the eight week regional course.

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