



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

Media Release

T&T PARTICIPATES IN REGIONAL TRADE TALKS IN GUYANA

December 6 2019: - Following the Forty-Ninth Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) held in November, 2019, Georgetown, Guyana, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago received approval for the suspension of the Common External Tariff (CET) on items of economic importance to the citizens and country. This approval include basic food items such as dried salted Pollock, cheddar cheese, black tea, corned beef, pasta, canned fish, apple juice, active yeast and baby food, pharmaceuticals, safety products (PPE), refined petroleum products, items used in national security (CCTV cameras) and inputs into the manufacturing sector. The suspension of the CET arrangements on these items is intended to impact import duties and maintain lower prices for both consumers and manufacturers.

At the meeting of Regional Trade Ministers, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry along with other officials of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Health, underscored the importance of safeguarding the local manufacturing sector to ensure growth, employment generation and opportunities for foreign exchange earnings.

A Regional Strategic and Implementation Plan for Services is currently being developed and once completed, will inter alia, facilitate the free movement of professionals, including Trinidad and Tobago professionals, within CARICOM in the areas of Tourism Services, Education Services, Sporting Services, Health and Wellness Services, Cultural Services, Professional Services, Information and Communication Technology Services and



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Postal and Courier Services. As CARICOM members continue to foster economic efficiency and social equity in the region, discussions were also held on the development of a Cohesion Policy for CARICOM which is intended to provide a mechanism for reducing the gaps in the development of Member States, regions and sectors.

Following the meeting of COTED, the Trade Ministers were joined by their Health counterparts for the Fifth Joint Meeting of the COTED and the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD). At this forum, the Ministers sought to develop policy recommendations for addressing the growing concerns of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the CARICOM Region and focused on threats posed to the Caribbean population through excessive consumption of salts, sugars, trans-fats and alcohol. Members agreed to the establishment of a Working Group on Unhealthy Diets and Obesogenic Food Environments to focus on NCD risk factors (salts, sugars and trans fats) and to the establishment of an Inter-Government Working Group to deliver a Regional Strategy and Action Plan on the Harmful Use of Alcohol.

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