



# Media Release

## NATIONAL QUALITY AWARDS LAUNCH & CEREMONY FOR THE PRESENTATION OF ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATES TO PUBLIC LABORATORIES

**March 15, 2023:-** On Wednesday March 15, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, presented the Feature Address at the launch of the National Quality Awards Programme and Ceremony for the Presentation of Accreditation Certificates to Public Laboratories, hosted by the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards. These two initiatives are key elements of the National Quality Policy (NQP) for Trinidad and Tobago (2018-2030) and is indicative of Government's commitment to developing a robust National Quality Infrastructure.

The Minister, in her address, noted, ***"The launch [represents] a manifestation of the Bureau's efforts in fulfilling its obligation to improve the quality and performance of goods and services traded in Trinidad and Tobago, through the promotion and implementation of the NQP."***

According to the Minister, the National Quality Awards Programme will recognise quality driven businesses involved in several sectors and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that, among other things, have successfully demonstrated the adoption and use of standards in their processes and operations, and have a robust quality management system in place.

***"It is my expectation that this recognition will motivate other companies to increase their focus on quality management issues within their respective businesses,"*** she said.

At the event, the National Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (NP) and the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), the first two public laboratories to participate in this programme, were presented with their accreditation certificates. Both labs successfully attained ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation, the primary international standard for testing and calibration laboratories.

In congratulating the organisations, Minister Gopee-Scoon said, "being ISO/IEC accredited, signals that these labs now possess robust quality management systems, which minimise risks and support quality and proficiency in their test results, demonstrating their capacity to deliver dependable results that are accepted internationally."

Given the immense benefits to be derived from this accreditation, the Minister encouraged other local public laboratories and conformity assessment bodies to commence the quality assurance journey through accreditation.

The Accreditation of Public Laboratories Programme is an integral part of the National Quality Policy. The programme falls under key component three of the policy: "Physical Infrastructure Development, Capacity Building and Organizational Strengthening." The programme was launched in 2019 and focuses on improving the competency and reliability of testing and calibration services performed by public laboratories in Trinidad and Tobago, with the aim of having all public laboratories accredited by 2030.

In concluding her Address, the Minister reiterated, "quality must be pervasive and must not be another cliché that's talked about and acted very little on. Rather, quality issues must be translated into tangible representations of who we are and what we do. It must be personified by us and be infused as part of our culture".

The event also comprised several distinguished speakers, which included His Excellency Peter Cavendish, Ambassador of the European Delegation to Trinidad and Tobago, Union; Deryck Omar, Chief Executive Officer, CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality; and representatives from NP, IMA, Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries.

The National Quality Awards Programme is funded by the European Union, through its Technical Barriers to Trade Component of the 11th European Development Fund Economic Partnership Agreement Programme. All eligible businesses are invited to be part of the programme, and be recognized as a leader in quality management in Trinidad and Tobago.

---

END

---