



# Media Release

## TRADE MINISTER RECEIVES SHANDONG DELEGATION AS PART OF NEW CHINA-CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

**April 22, 2023:-** Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon welcomed a delegation from China's eastern Shandong province, led by Ms. Chen Baiwei, Deputy Director-General of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Shandong Provincial People's Government on 21 April 2023. This follows the delegation's visits to Jamaica and Guyana, and comes in the wake of the inauguration of the China-Caribbean Development Centre in Jinan, capital of Shandong province, in July 2022.

Jointly built by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Shandong Provincial People's Government, the Centre is focused on deepening exchanges and cooperation between China and the Caribbean region in several areas including poverty reduction, food security, public health, climate change, green development and the digital economy, among others.

Minister Gopee-Scoon acknowledged the importance of the Centre and the many areas through which there can be mutual cooperation and progress between Trinidad and Tobago and China. One area that the Minister welcomed further collaboration in was agriculture/agro-processing, in particular smart agriculture, which was needed to overcome the physical constraints of land, and the seed varieties programme, which would help Trinidad and Tobago achieve its goal of food security. Ms. Baiwei indicated that Shandong produces over half of China's agricultural needs and is considered the country's 'bread basket'. The Minister recommended a virtual meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to discuss how these and other initiatives could be realized.

The Minister also underscored the efforts to diversify and grow the local economy through expansion of sectors such as the manufacturing sector and the blue economy/maritime sector, as well as the development of new economic spaces and regulatory systems such as the Phoenix Park Industrial Estate (PPIE) and the Special Economic

Zones (SEZ) regime. Ms. Baiwei added that due to Shandong's coastal presence, there was also significant activity in pharmaceutical research and development using marine resources that Trinidad and Tobago could benefit from. During the meeting, it was also agreed that business delegations from both countries would continue to increase mutual participation in the various trade shows and investment forums organized by China and Trinidad and Tobago. Both investTT and exportTT also presented on the numerous opportunities available for trade and investment in Trinidad and Tobago.

In addition to economic linkages, Minister Gopee-Scoon underscored the importance of forging closer cultural and social ties between both countries. Both sides agreed to the possibility of creating an online virtual symposium to further the objectives of the China-Caribbean Development Centre and Trinidad and Tobago's participation in the Global Youth Conference in Shandong in July 2023. The conference will be attended by young people from over 50 countries and create a platform for young people to deepen exchanges. The Youth Conference will also include a Global Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition and involve entrepreneurship service institutions and parks, venture capital funds and entrepreneurship mentors to help Chinese and international youth exploit innovation opportunities.

Also in attendance in the bilateral discussions were Mr. Pang Long, Deputy Director of Foreign Affairs Office of Jinan Municipal People's Government; Mr. Sui Yunpeng, Deputy Director of International Exchange and Cooperation Division, Shandong Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism; Ms. Tang Tingting, Deputy Director of American and Oceanian Affairs Division, the Foreign Affairs Office of Shandong Provincial People's Government; Mr. Zhou Lichun, Counsellor, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; Mrs. Ayleen Alleyne-Ovid, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry; Mr. Randall Karim, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry; Mrs. Franka Costelloe, Chairperson, investTT; and Mr. Dhanraj Harrypersad, General Manager, ExportTT.

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