



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

## Ministry of Trade and Industry

# MEDIA RELEASE

## ***Trinidad and Tobago Committed to Exports of Fish and Fish Products to the EU***

September 27, 2023:- The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) notes the articles titled “Red card’ for T&T – Fish products face possible ban from EU’, published in the Express Newspaper on 27th September 2023 and the Newsday, “*T&T Fish Exports Banned from the EU.*”

While the EU is the world’s largest importer of fisheries products, as noted in the article, it is important to highlight that only 0.022% of Trinidad and Tobago’s fisheries exports are destined to the EU. Furthermore, when total trade is considered, fishing exports to the EU account for only 0.00007% of Trinidad and Tobago’s trade with that region.

Notwithstanding, the recent actions by the EU will not deter the MTI from seeking to enhance market access in the EU for local fisheries and fish-containing products, as well as other items. For example, in January 2022, the MTI was informed of EU Commission Delegated Regulation 630 adopted in 2021 which aims to protect humans from animal and plant pests or diseases, and calls for compliance with the EU’s agri-food chain legislation. It was determined that the Regulation could serve as a barrier to trade if exporters are unable to meet the required standards and if the country where the goods originate is not among the EU’s list of third countries approved to export to the EU. Therefore, the MTI took immediate action to seek Trinidad and Tobago’s inclusion in the EU’s List of Approved Third Countries.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee approved by Cabinet was established to oversee Trinidad and Tobago’s application to obtain approval to export plant and animal products (including fisheries), as well as composite products, to the EU. An Expression of Interest (EOI), the first step in the process, was submitted to the EU in 2022, and after review by the EU Authorities, Trinidad and Tobago was invited to submit its Pre-Mission Questionnaire. The Questionnaire was submitted in August 2023 to the EU and the MTI is awaiting a response. The EU’s response will indicate whether further information is necessary or whether Trinidad and Tobago could move to the third phase of the



process, which is a local visit to audit the country's regulatory systems. The EU has assured that bilateral discussions will continue to resolve outstanding issues. The success of this application would augur well for Trinidad and Tobago's approval to export fisheries products as well as other animal and plant products in the future.

It must be underscored that the matter of exports of fish products, particularly to the EU, is a complex issue. The MTI recognizes and supports the global thrust for sustainable fisheries. In this regard, the MTI continues to work with the line Ministry – the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, and other regional and international stakeholders, to ensure that the requisite legal framework; and monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms are in place locally to meet international requirements.

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