



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Trade and Industry

exporTT LONG SERVICE AWARDS

FEATURE ADDRESS

AVA MAHABIR-DASS, DEPUTY PERMANENT SECRETARY (Ag)
MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

DECEMBER 16TH, 2023

Salutations

- Mr. Ashmeer Mohamed, Chairman, exporTT
- Members of the Board of Directors, exporTT
- Mr. Dhanraj Harrypersad, General Manager, Client Services, exporTT
- Mrs. Maria Padilla-Benjamin, General Manager Operations, exporTT
- Awardees
- Specially Invited Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening and thank you all for being here tonight.

It is an honour to stand before you as we gather to celebrate the Long Service Awardees of the National Export Facilitation Organization of Trinidad and Tobago - exporTT. This evening, we are not just in a room filled with colleagues and friends, but a room filled with dedication, perseverance, and years of incomparable service.

exporTT has always been a beacon of progress and growth, not just for us, but for the entire country. According to the World Bank, trade is the lifeblood of the global economy—it drives growth and competitiveness, it promotes fairness, it spurs innovation and fosters efficiency. When trade flows in a rules-based system, jobs, wages, and investment increases.

Several of the firsts' that exporTT Limited has accomplished, would not have been possible without its main organ, the human resources of the Agency, you. The unique history of this Agency spans several impactful projects including:

- Hosting the first ever Export Development Forum in 2013, that focused exclusively on exports and attracted over 500 participants over a 2 day span. This Forum provided a platform for exporters, potential exporters, export support agencies and other interested parties to discuss issues and opportunities related to diversifying and increasing exports to traditional and non-traditional markets.
- Another would have been the Inward Buyers Trade Mission in both 2014 and 2015 with 40 exporters and 25 buyers. In 2022, this project was refreshed and executed again and has been delivering remarkable results and receiving positive feedback from both buyers and exporters. In Fiscal 2023 this Mission resulted in three (3) orders valued at US \$86,000.
- The International Trade Specialist Accreditation (eBSI) nine month e-learning Programme, enabled participants of the programme to achieve practical international trade skills and knowledge, culminating in a globally recognized certification for professionals working in the key functional areas of International Trade. This programme resulted in over 90 exporters, staff and stakeholders becoming certified graduates, after being equipped with the capacity to engage in all the processes related to export.
- exporTT has also worked with the Shipping Association and the Ports of Trinidad and Tobago to ensure the ease of trade for our nation's exporters, by creating awareness about the Safety of Life at Seas (SOLAS) Verified Gross Mass (VGM) regulation weight verifications, so that exporters' shipments were uninterrupted.

- exporTT also facilitated the launch of the EBI in Fiscal 2020/21, which today includes key initiatives such as the International Certification Fund, a Labelling and Product Testing Fund, an Export Accelerator Programme, Virtual Trade Missions and Market Intelligence. This initiative has provided support to seven (7) sectors across 14 markets and yielded more than USD 3 million in exports to date; and this figure continues to rise as new and return orders are ongoing.
- Accordingly, essential partnerships with key stakeholders such as the TTMA, EXIMBANK, TTCSI, CreativeTT, CARIRI, THA and TT CHAMBER were forged by the exporTT and have strengthened the forces behind our encouraging trade performance.

Your work has enabled countless businesses to flourish, created jobs, and contributed to our economy. You have been the guiding light for many entrepreneurs, helping them navigate the tumultuous waters of international trade. But none of this would be possible without the dedicated individuals we are here to honour tonight.

This evening we celebrate those of you who have dedicated a minimum of 10 and up to 20 plus years of service to this Organization. Those of you with over 20 years of service would have been part of the evolution of exporTT Limited, from the Small Business Development Company Limited (SBDC), then to the Business Development Company (BDC), to the current iteration - exporTT.

You, the staff are the backbone of exporTT, and your unyielding commitment has been instrumental in shaping it into the organization it is today. You have weathered the storms, embraced the changes, and have always strived for excellence.

Each one of you being honoured tonight have displayed immense loyalty and dedication, often going above and beyond the call of duty. You have not just been employees, but mentors, leaders, and friends and have shown that service is not just about time, but about heart, dedication, and commitment.

As we celebrate this long service, we also acknowledge the sacrifices you have made over the years. We understand that for every late night, every challenging project; there would have been occasions that the time you gave to exporTT resulted in you foregoing a personal commitment. We are deeply grateful for your sacrifices and want to express our heartfelt appreciation.

Whether it has been in the realm of customer service, administration, marketing, or any of the numerous roles that make up your dynamic team, you have contributed to making exporTT a world-class organization recognized for its excellence. Each one of you have been a vital piece of the puzzle, creating a complete picture of success.

This evening is a testament to your hard work and unwavering dedication. It is a reflection of the indomitable spirit that you carry within you, and it is a celebration of the journey that you have taken with exporTT.

So, as we present these awards tonight, I ask that you keep in mind that they are not just a token of your service, but a symbol of our gratitude and respect for each and every one of you. You have set the bar high, and are an inspiring example for others to follow.

Thank you for your tireless efforts, your unwavering dedication, and your incredible resilience. May you continue to shine and inspire others to follow in your footsteps.

This evening's celebration is dedicated to you, the stalwarts of exporTT!
Thank you.