



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

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***The Caribbean Poultry Association's Seventh  
International Technical Symposium and  
Exhibition***  
***"Sustainability & Resilience in the  
Caribbean Poultry Sector"***

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**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE-SCOON**  
**MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2024**

## **SALUTATIONS**

- Mr. Robin Phillips, President of the Poultry Association of Trinidad and Tobago
- Mr. Hamant Mahabir, President Caribbean Poultry Association

Good evening.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to address you at this evenings Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony hosted by the Caribbean Poultry Association (CPA). This event culminates the Association's Seventh International Technical Symposium and Exhibition hosted during the past few days and served as a platform for advancing the industry through sharing knowledge, exploring innovation, and addressing challenges.

It was not very long ago that many countries around the world were reporting of extraordinary levels of inflation and product shortages, both a result of the cumulative effects of the global pandemic, international conflicts, logistical challenges and climatic changes disrupting agricultural production.

Among the many important issues that have arisen over the last few years has been the pressing matter of Food Security. The access to safe and healthy food is vital to long life and good health. It is also critical for our regional economies that rely heavily on the hospitality sector and tourism, recreation and food and beverage industries.

The Poultry industry is the single largest agribusiness sector in the region, supplying more than 82% of the region's animal protein dietary needs. This is according to information from the CPA. This underlines the sector's importance to the Region's food security and broader economic prospects.

Fortunately for us in the region we have some of the most resilient poultry farmers in the world. Over the last few challenging years, they have been able to adapt to global events to ensure that our pots were not empty (whether it be Curry Chicken or Chicken Curry). No Poultry producer closed their doors during the pandemic. *This is testimony to the strength of the regional industry and is deserving of applause.*

Notwithstanding the resilience and good work that has been achieved by our producers thus far, as we look towards the future, we must not forget the lessons that the past has taught us.

We must safeguard against both internal and external shocks that may affect our ability to feed ourselves and sustain our industries and economies. Both the industry players and policy makers must therefore commit to building a dynamic poultry industry into one:

1. that is efficient and able to produce as much as is needed and available when needed,
2. that produces food at affordable prices
3. that produces healthy food
4. and that is environmentally responsible and also resilient to adverse weather conditions

On this, there are two points I wish to emphasize. Firstly, as we develop the poultry industry, we must place emphasis on innovation and technology. We must revolutionize the way we produce, process, and distribute poultry products. By embracing innovation and adopting cutting-edge technologies, we can enhance efficiency, quality, and profitability throughout the value chain.

Secondly in an era defined by environmental concerns and climate change, the Poultry industry must embrace sustainable practices that minimize its ecological footprint whether through improved waste management or renewable energy initiatives, we have a collective responsibility to safeguard the planet for future generations.

The question that arises is how do we achieve these objectives.

In response, I offer that we must continue to execute and build upon the existing efforts and initiatives that have been or will be undertaken in the region. According to the Poultry Association of Trinidad and Tobago (PATT) some of these initiatives include:

- the establishment of additional Hatcheries such as the one established in Trinidad and Tobago;
- New feed mills in Barbados and Guyana;
- New poultry processing facilities in Suriname and Nevis;
- Adding new transport vehicles at every plant in CARICOM;
- The expansion of tunnel-ventilated pens across the Caribbean; and
- New refrigeration facilities for freezing and chilling poultry products across the region.

In addition to this body of regional work, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has also undertaken several initiatives to support the local poultry industry that may find value with others in the region.

To aid in the production of safe and healthy food for export primarily and import substitution, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has also established an International Certification Fund that covers up to 100% of the cost of obtaining international certification for eligible applicants.

As part of the National Quality Policy of Trinidad and Tobago 2018-2030, the government has also developed a number of voluntary national standards to assist local producers to improve quality and safety in the agriculture sector and assist in raising the competitiveness of local producers.

Among these include, the Good Manufacturing Practices or GMP which establishes processes and procedures that ensure food products are produced according to set quality standards.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am of the firm belief that by working together we can build a more efficient, resilient, and sustainable poultry industry in the region. Help us to realize the Sustainable Development Goal 2 – Zero Hunger and Sustainable Development Goal 3 Good Health and Well-Being.

As we pursue a better industry and attainment of these SDGs, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence, integrity, and sustainability. Let us harness the power of collective action to build a brighter future for our industry, our communities, and our Region.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the Caribbean Poultry Association and the participants that have made this Symposium and Exhibition possible. I extend congratulations to all nominees and award recipients at this evening's Dinner and Awards ceremony.

I thank you.