



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Government of Trinidad and Tobago committed to increased Bilateral Trade with Guyana

May 15 2024: The Ministry of Trade and Industry has noted the on-going issue relating to the Trade in Milk Products between Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Based on a review of this matter, the following salient points are noteworthy:

- (1) *There is no prohibition on the importation of Animal Products into Trinidad and Tobago from any CARICOM Member State including Guyana. However, for these products to be exported to Trinidad and Tobago, countries must be approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF). This is a one-time approval associated with first-time exports;*
- (2) *Trinidad and Tobago like every country within CARICOM and the rest of the world follows the generally accepted international standards under the auspices of the World Organisation for Animal Health for the trade in Animal Products. These standards which are meant to ensure the health and safety of consumers are operationalised within domestic law via the Animal (Diseases and Importation) Act;*
- (3) *The existing standard for the importation of milk into Trinidad and Tobago (which is identical in Guyana) requires all importers to apply for an import permit from the Animal Production and Health Division (MALF). This application must be made in advance of the products arriving in Trinidad and Tobago and even before items are purchased from overseas exporters;*



- (4) *In order for an Import Permit to be issued for 'first-time' imports of milk from **any country**, a Risk Analysis is required to be undertaken by the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO). This information was communicated to the Local Importer by the CVO on Friday 19 April 2024 which was the same date an application was submitted on TTBizlinK for an animal permit;*
- (5) *On Monday 22 April 2024 a consignment of goods which included (i) Milk; (ii) Mineral Waters; and Flavoured Beverages landed in Trinidad and Tobago. Upon arrival in Trinidad and Tobago, the Mineral Waters and Favoured Beverage items were cleared and sent to the premises of the Importer by the Chemistry Food and Drugs Division (CFDD) on the condition that the Importer produces a Free Sale Certificate/Animal Health Permit; and*
- (6) *With respect to the Milk Items, the Importer took the decision to return these products to the Exporter in Guyana as it did not possess the requisite regulatory documentation.*

In order to resolve this matter, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry and Mr. Randall Karim, Permanent Secretary (Ag.) met with representatives of the Guyana Private Sector Commission (GPSC) led by its Chairman Mr. Komal Singh at the Office of the GPSC. Also in attendance were senior representatives of Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL). Minister Gopee-scoon shared with the representatives of the Guyana private sector the specific facts and timelines associated with the importation of products from DDL. Following the Minister's explanation, all Parties agreed that the genesis of the matter arose out of a misunderstanding by the importer of the specific regulatory requirements for the importation of these products into Trinidad and Tobago.

Minister Gopee-Scoon gave the commitment to DDL that upon receipt of the relevant information, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would expeditiously process the regulatory requirements for DDL. Mr. Komal Samaroo, Chairman of DDL expressed his

profound thanks to Minister Gopee-Scoon for the manner in which the matter will be addressed and indicated that his company will work with the authorities in Trinidad and Tobago to resolve the matter.

Minister Gopee-Scoon also assured the representatives of the Guyana private sector that Trinidad and Tobago was fully committed improved intra-regional CARICOM trade and remained open to increased imports from Guyana and other CARICOM Members. In order to facilitate increased trade and proactively resolve trade disputes between the both countries, it was agreed that a mechanism in the form of a bilateral committee comprising representatives of the public and private sector from both countries would be soon established.

On conclusion of the meeting, all Parties agreed that the discussions were extremely fruitful and agreed to work in a collaborative manner to strengthen CARICOM trade.

Minister Gopee-Scoon was in Guyana Chairing the Fifty-Eighth Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) which concluded earlier today 15 May 2024.

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