

Media Release

First Phase of Trinidad and Tobago's National E-Commerce Strategy Completed

16 July, 2024: As the Ministry of Trade and Industry forges ahead with the development of Trinidad and Tobago's National E-Commerce Strategy 2024-2029, the first phase of the Project was completed this week (July 2024).

This involved the preparation of the country's eTrade Readiness Assessment by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which documented the gaps, opportunities and challenges to e-commerce development locally, coming out of the National Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Session held in Port of Spain in March 2024.

Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, in her remarks at the Opening Session of the eTrade Readiness Assessment Validation Session and Workshop on the National E-Commerce Strategy held on July 16-17, 2024 at the Hyatt Regency, stated that "according to the World Trade Organization, the rise of the digital economy provides a range of new opportunities for small and medium sized firms to play a more active role in global value chains. E-commerce and digital transformation remain a core area of focus for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, as a strong driving force for innovation, growth, trade and social prosperity." Minister Gopee-Scoon underscored the Ministry's commitment to creating an enabling environment to facilitate and promote e-commerce, where businesses can thrive, consumers can shop with confidence and innovation can flourish.

Ms. Joanna Kazana, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Trinidad and Tobago underscored the importance of e-commerce and eTrade to not only improving the competitiveness of firms, but also the resilience of countries in recovering from natural disasters. Ms. Ina Hodge, on behalf of Mr. Torbjörn Fredriksson, Head, E-Commerce and Digital Economy Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD indicated that the "UN Trade and Development is honoured to support Trinidad and Tobago on its journey towards a robust digital economy, taking full advantage of the opportunities of e-commerce. We believe that the new national E-commerce Strategy will serve as a cornerstone for making e-commerce a significant contributor to inclusive and sustainable development in Trinidad and Tobago".

This two-day Session provided the opportunity for national stakeholders to discuss and validate the findings of the eTrade Readiness Assessment. Some of the preliminary areas already identified for action in the Assessment include updated legal and regulatory frameworks; enhanced and coordinated logistical system for delivery of goods; strengthened data collection efforts on ICT and e-commerce to inform policy-making; affordable online payment solutions; business incubators and digital literacy programmes; and targeted financing programs for small and medium sized enterprises.

In addition, the Workshop will mark the commencement of the second phase of the Project - drafting of the National E-Commerce Strategy; with the Mission, Vision and Priority Areas for the Strategy defined by stakeholders. The Validation Session and Workshop included participation from approximately seventy (70) key public, private, civil society representatives and academia in the local e-commerce landscape.

Trinidad and Tobago remains on track to complete the National E-Commerce Strategy 2024-2029 by December 2024.

Photo Caption:

Senator the Hon. Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry (2nd from R) with (from R-L): Ms. Joanna Kazana, UN Resident Coordinator, Trinidad and Tobago; Ms. Ava Mahabir-Dass, Deputy Permanent Secretary-MTI; Ms. Ina Hodge (on behalf of Torbjörn Fredriksson) Head, E-Commerce and Digital Economy Branch, Division of Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD; Mr. David Hughes, Consultant, UNCTAD and Ms. Candice Lackhansingh, Director, Policy and Strategy Directorate, Ministry of Trade and Industry, at the eTrade Ready Validation and E-commerce Strategy Vision Workshop, Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain, July 16, 2024.