



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

'Manufacturing giant, regional powerhouse' ABIL celebrates half a century

November 2, 2024: On Saturday November 2, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, congratulated the founder, executive team and staff of Associated Brands Industries Limited (ABIL) and recognised the group of companies for its strength, vision, innovation, and ongoing contribution to community and country as it commemorated 50 years in business.

In delivering the Feature Address at the company's anniversary gala at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad, Minister Gopee-Scoon described the Group as a manufacturing giant locally and in the CARICOM region, identifying its international reach, employment of over 1,700 individuals and its position as one of this country's largest exporters.

The Minister said, "From simple beginnings to a modern enterprise that boasts a truly international reach, Associated Brands has become a regional powerhouse. It stands as one of the largest exporters in Trinidad and Tobago's food and beverage sector, selling a range of products and brands in over 30 countries across the globe, including the Caribbean (the largest market), North America, Europe and Asia. Between 2015 - 2023, Trinidad and Tobago's food and beverage exports grew by 49 percent from TT\$2.1 billion to TT\$3.2 billion. ABIL's exports in 2023 represented over 16 percent of the total value of this country's food and beverage exports for that year, running into the hundreds of millions. This is a remarkable feat and one that could only be achieved through leadership and an unwavering commitment to innovation and growth."

Competing successfully with several international brands, the manufacturing and distribution company produces snack foods and ready-to-eat cereals that remain in the consciousness of consumers. The Minister said, "With competition from multinationals such as Kellogg, General Mills, Post, Nestle, Hersheys, Mars, Kraft Foods and PepsiCo to name a few, Associated Brands has held its own, and has flourished, creating new, healthier products and revitalizing old ones. Zelish, one of the Group's latest products is made from 100 percent natural peas and pulses, vegan,

cholesterol-free, dairy-free and has no trans-fat. Catch, on the other hand is an old favourite that is still catching on.”

The Minister went on to praise company Founder Arthur Lok Jack for his “vision and undeniable ability to create value with his every undertaking,” as well as his commitment to the overall development of Trinidad and Tobago, mentioning his participation on many state boards. She also recognised Mr. Nicholas Lok Jack, Group CEO and Deputy Chairman, and the ABIL executive team for their invaluable contribution. “Through innovation, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, the company has carved out a unique place in the hearts of consumers here in Trinidad and Tobago and around the world.”

The Group operates manufacturing facilities in Trinidad and Tobago, Malta and Colombia, as well as distribution companies across the Caribbean, Central and North America. Despite the intense focus on expanding extra-regionally, exports from Trinidad and Tobago still account for over two-thirds of total sales. The Minister said, “This underscores the company’s commitment to Trinidad and Tobago and sends a clear signal that, despite our challenges, we remain a viable location for world-class manufacturers.”

END