



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Ministry of Trade and Industry applauds return of 'Mustapha Chrome,' proclaiming a boost to steelpan industry

January 08, 2025: The Ministry of Trade and Industry celebrates the return of Trinidad and Tobago's very own "Mustapha Chrome," officially called Chrome Furnishers Limited, whose relaunch will allow steelpan manufacturers to readily satisfy the growing demand for quality chromed steelpans locally and abroad at a lower cost and for shorter production times than having it done overseas.

In delivering Remarks at the ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the occasion on Wednesday (January 8, 2025), Senator the Hon. Paula Gopee-Scoon said, "Chrome Furnishers has been a part of the business community in El Socorro for several decades. With a combination of perseverance, commitment, as well as support from the Government, this business has literally risen from the ashes to once again serve the community and the people of Trinidad and Tobago."

The Government's support came in the form of the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Steelpan Manufacturing Grant Fund Facility, which covered new specialised equipment allowing Chrome Furnishers Ltd., a third generation, family-owned company, to officially resume operations on Jan 6, 2025. The company had ceased operations following a devastating fire in 2021.

The grant is among the Ministry's initiatives implemented to provide tools necessary for expansion, including upgrading machinery, acquiring new technologies and investing in training, all of which are aimed at enhancing the standards, innovation, and marketing of locally manufactured products, such as the steelpan.

Praising the company, the Minister said, "Today, Chrome Furnishers Limited reaffirms its commitment to playing a critical role in boosting the steelpan industry." She noted that over the past four years, many pan manufacturers have had to ship their pans overseas to be chromed, a process known to improve the aesthetics of the steelpan and enhance the sound and durability of the instrument. Now, with the relaunch of the facility, manufacturers will be able to "capture additional value-added activities along the steelpan value chain."

Data from the Central Statistical Office indicate the steelpan industry is marked for significant growth, with exports of steelband instruments increasing by approximately 68 percent from TT\$1.9 million in 2022 to TT\$3.1 million in 2023. Moreover, with the recently inaugurated World Steelpan Day celebrated globally, the Minister said, “we can all expect an increase in demand for the instrument and even greater expectations for top-notch quality; which can only come from the place of origin of the instrument—Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore the Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to providing an enabling environment for the growth of the steelpan manufacturing sector, as a means of generating foreign exchange, creating meaningful employment and diversifying the economy.”

Minister Gopee-Scoon also shared that the Ministry of Trade and Industry has also established the Trinidad and Tobago National Steelpan Steering Committee to develop a National Governance Framework for the Steelpan industry. The Minister said, “following strategic research and stakeholder consultations, the Committee has proposed a number of initiatives to boost the appeal and demand of national instrument that involve, among other areas, Manufacturing, Archiving, Education, Recording, Marketing, Entertainment, Standards, and Research and Development, to be implemented by various Ministries. These programmes ensure that the steelpan grows to represent more than just our culture, but is transformed into a home-grown creation that generates with it employment and a vibrant economy.”

The Minister further indicated that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago also aims to implement a Steelpan Tuner Apprenticeship Programme toward developing requisite skills and services in the industry, providing for the holistic development of the steelpan industry.

Deputy Chairman of the National Steelpan Steering Committee Professor Clément Imbert said he was delighted to see the company’s return. Describing some of the science behind chroming, he emphasized the importance of the process to “brightening the sound,” improving resistance to corrosion and improving the tonal characteristics of the steelpan.

Speaking on behalf of the Mohammed family, Ms. Nadia Mohammed, Director of Chrome Furnishers Limited, made special mention of steelpan tuners. She said, “Without you creating these hand crafted instruments, we would not have a single instrument to chrome, no one would have a pan to play, no arrangers, steel bands and the melodious steelpan music would not exist.”

Moving forward, the company expects to employ around 35-40 individuals during peak periods.

Concluding her statement, the Minister commended the work of Chrome Furnishers Limited and recognised the Chairman and members of the National Steering Committee for their efforts in creating a more sustainable industry, and the many others who are paving the way for future success.

“As we celebrate this occasion, let us remember that the steelpan has become more than just an instrument; it is a symbol of our culture, our creativity and our collective efforts towards a more prosperous tomorrow.”

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