

Remarks by
Minister of Trade and Industry
Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon

SOD-TURNING CEREMONY

NUTRIMIX GROUP OF COMPANIES
ANIMAL AND PET FOOD PLANT

Corner Atlantic & Pacific Avenue,
Point Lisas Industrial Estate

Tuesday 25th February 2025
10:30 a.m.

SALUTATIONS

**Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

**Hon. Stuart Young S.C., Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and
Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister**

**Senator the Honourable Avinash G. Singh, Minister in the Ministry of
Agriculture, Land and Fisheries**

**Senator the Honourable Richie Sookhai, Minister in the Ministry of
Works and Transport**

**Her Excellency Maria Elisa Teófilo de Luna, Ambassador for the
Federative Republic of Brazil**

Other members of the Diplomatic Corps

Dr. Lackram Bodoë, Member of Parliament for Fyzabad

**Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh, Member of Parliament
for Couva South**

Mr. Rushton Paray, Member of Parliament for Mayaro

**Mr. Randall Karim, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry
and other Permanent Secretaries**

Mr. Navin Ramsingh, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Min. of Works and Transport

Mr. Ronnie Mohammed, CEO of the Nutrimix Group of Companies and other company executives.

Specially invited guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning,

I am honoured to be hosted by the Nutrimix Group of Companies and to address you on the occasion of the Sod-Turing Ceremony of the **Nutrimix Animal and Pet Food Plant**, commemorating yet another milestone for this company.

Just two (2) years ago, we were celebrating the opening of Nutrimix's Next Generation Hatchery in Brechin Castle. It therefore gives me great pleasure to once again be a part of the vision, innovation and expansion that this company continually offers-yet another investment tapping into technological advancement and enhancing competitiveness resulting in growth. The facility is being constructed against the concept of smart manufacturing with a view to increasing efficiency, improving quality and achieving economies of scale.

The Nutrimix Group, which has been traditionally involved in the

poultry value chain, certainly symbolizes what ‘confidence in the economy’ means, and this is an example of how businesses can build what I can only call strategic diversification; adding new product offerings in this instance, to the Nutrimix landscape.

Diversification

The Government has been consistent in supporting the national diversification agenda with the promotion of manufacturing and agricultural activities. It is therefore fitting that we acknowledge that we are engaged in ‘ground-breaking’ activity which will enhance the Agro-processing sector, in the heart of this country’s traditional hub for Oil and Gas. This ladies and gentlemen, is a true representation of strategic and successful diversification.

The diversification efforts of companies like Nutrimix have been replicated on a wider scale. For example, over the eight year period 2016-2023, the food and beverage sector increased by 49% moving from TT\$2.1 billion to TT\$3.2 billion. In fact since 2015, the

non-energy sector has grown by 75% from TT\$61 billion in 2015 to TT\$107 billion in 2024 (GDP excluding petrochemicals at constant prices). **Further evidence of real diversification.**

Investment Value and Job Creation

As mentioned earlier, with an investment of approximately TT\$150 million, this state of the art Animal and Pet Food Plant will include two (2) pelletized lines for feeds, producing 20 tonnes per hour with extrusion lines up to 5 tonnes per hour; yielding greater efficiency and higher quality output.

The Government is pleased and supportive of the growing trend of local re-investments which continue to drive the expansion of the manufacturing and agro-processing sectors among other sectors. It not only reflects the private sector's confidence in the economy but also serves as clear evidence that Government's policies and programmes are **delivering results.**

Over the last nine years, a number of manufacturers expanded their product lines with the importation of new and advanced machinery and equipment. In Fiscal 2023, looking at the importation of machinery to support expansion in manufacturing, there were reinvestments and new investments of TT\$3.2 Billion in the food and beverage sector.

In Fiscal 2024, 88 non-energy manufacturing companies invested approximately TT\$2.27 billion in their existing operations and created over 1,800 additional jobs; and **these are only the figures that are known to us, there are more!**

Greater Food Security

Nutrimix's bold step in backward integration within the agricultural value chain is what is needed as we seek to achieve greater food security and achieve the goals established by CARICOM under the 25 by 25 initiative.

Import/Export (Animal Feed and Pet Food)

Over the period January 2020 - December 2024 Trinidad and Tobago imported an estimated 302 million kilograms worth of animal feed at a value of TT\$1.3 billion. In contrast, the country has exported 13 million kilograms of animal feed at a value of TT\$60 million. This figure excludes dog/cat food and bird seeds.

Looking at the potential for export, the global import market for Animal Feed experienced significant growth from \$17.91 billion in 2020 to a peak of \$22.79 billion in 2022, before slightly declining to \$20.78 billion in 2023. The top importers in 2023 were Belgium (\$997M), Germany (\$953M), and the Netherlands (\$911M), reflecting strong demand in European markets, while the United States (\$894M) remains a key non-European importer. For Trinidad and Tobago, the markets with the greatest export potential for Animal Feed are the United States, Barbados, and Saint Lucia.

The country has also traditionally been a net importer of pet food.

Notably, over the period January 2020 - December 2024, a total of approximately 50 million kilograms of pet food was imported at a value of TT\$523 million. At the same time, 639,000 kilograms was exported at a value of TT\$8.3 million.

The global pet food market size was valued at USD \$126.6 Billion in 2024 presenting opportunity for entering the international market place and earning foreign exchange. It is noted that the United States, Panama and Chile are the top three (3) greatest export potential markets. Beyond the top three, other high-potential markets close to us include Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, Belize, Saint Lucia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Germany, France, China, the UK, Mexico.

Special Economic Zone

This project would fit well into the new Special Economic Zones Regime which is designed to support companies (particularly in the non-energy sector) in bringing substantial capital in order to

contribute to the development of the economy with higher standards of technology and innovation.

Operating under the SEZ Regime will allow your company, like others, to benefit from various tax incentives, reduced duties, regulatory advantages and also access to increased export opportunities.

The Special Economic Zones Authority has already granted a license to a Business Processing Organization and is currently processing fifteen (15) other applications in various sectors such as manufacturing, agro-processing, logistics and distribution.

Ease of Doing Business

I am pleased to hear Ronnie's testimony that many of the agencies involved in this project were efficient. It is a direct outcome of the Government's continuous drive to improve the ease of doing

business.

By example, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has been investing heavily in upgrading its Single Electronic Window platform. To date, the modernized TTBizLink platform supports 48 e-services with 21 of these accepting online payments. Notably, online approvals are granted in less than one day. Next month another 5 e-services will be launched to support the tourism and scrap metal industries.

We are also pushing ahead with the implementation of the Port Community System which is aimed at integrating the IT platforms of Customs, the Ports and the TTBizLink platform to enable seamless data exchange and improve the efficiency of import and export clearances.

In April 2025 the Maritime Module will enable processing of vessel pre-arrival and departure declarations by border control agencies and by June 2025 the Ocean Import (Voyage and Manifest) Module

will allow submission of cargo manifest data and electronic release of cargo by the Customs and Excise Division and the ports.

Through the PCS, businesses will benefit from faster and more reliable port operations, leading to cost savings and improved service delivery.

Conclusion

As I close, we look forward to the completion of this project and I recognize and commend Nutrimix for taking this step. Let me take this opportunity to reaffirm the Government's unwavering support to your company in this venture and the Ministry of Trade and Industry's availability to assist where possible.

Congratulations to all on the commencement of this transformative project.

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