



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force Members Sign Landmark Anti-Counterfeiting and Anti-Piracy Charter

April 16, 2025: Members of the Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force (AITTF) reaffirmed their commitment to protecting legitimate trade and consumer rights by signing the Anti-Counterfeiting and Anti-Piracy Charter during a ceremony at the Ministry of Trade and Industry's headquarters in Port-of-Spain earlier today.

The Charter was developed by the Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office (TTIPO) with technical support from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). It reflects the shared values of corporate social responsibility, ethical business conduct, respect for intellectual property rights, and zero tolerance for counterfeiting and piracy.

Signatories included the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA), the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce (TTCIC), and Crime Stoppers Trinidad and Tobago.

Delivering remarks at the signing, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Mr. Randall Karim described the occasion as a pivotal moment in the national effort to curb illicit trade.

"These illegal practices undermine legitimate businesses, distort markets, and erode investor confidence," he said. "Illicit trade in counterfeit and substandard goods poses the most deceptive threats to the business environment, economic growth, fair competition, public health, and consumer trust."

AITTF is co-chaired by Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Trade and Industry and National Security. With representation from nine public sector agencies, two major private sector organisations and a civil society partner, it exemplifies a successful public-private sector approach to combatting illegal trade in consumer items.

The Charter encourages signatories to take practical steps to combat counterfeiting and piracy. These include:

- Educating vendors and consumers
- Enhancing internal controls
- Collaborating with law enforcement agencies
- Preventing the sale of counterfeit goods, especially pharmaceuticals
- Preventing the importation and sale of devices adapted for piracy
- Supporting consumer awareness campaigns
- Assisting rightsholders and judicial authorities in identifying and prosecuting offenders

Mr. Darrin Carmichael, Director of Crime Stoppers Trinidad and Tobago, also addressed the gathering. He stated, "At Crime Stoppers, we know firsthand how damaging counterfeit goods can be, not just to brands and bottom lines, but to people's safety and trust. Whether dealing in fake pharmaceuticals, illicit alcohol or tobacco, sub-standard cleaning agents, these crimes put lives at risk and fuel larger criminal networks."

He said the Charter represented a shared promise to protect businesses, communities, and the economy.

Mr. Emil Ramkissoon, Vice President of the TTMA, also reinforced the manufacturing sector's support for the charter.

"We firmly believe that safeguarding intellectual property is critical to ensuring the sustainability and growth of our manufacturing sector, and by extension, the economic resilience of Trinidad and Tobago," he said. "Today's signing of the Charter is more than a symbolic gesture. It is a powerful reaffirmation of our collective dedication to strengthening enforcement, promoting ethical trade, and preserving the integrity of our economy."

President of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber, Ms. Sonji Pierre-Chase commended the Ministry of Trade and Industry's efforts to protect intellectual property rights.

"We at the T&T Chamber understand that illicit trade and counterfeiting have a direct impact on our country's economic growth by stifling innovation and directly affecting business revenue," Ms. Pierre-Chase said. "Trinidad and Tobago is, once again, at a crossroad in its economic outlook. We are all aware of the increasing reliance on our non-energy industries to shoulder a heavier burden for future economic growth. Fulfilment of that objective, without question, requires a playing field that is unencumbered by the ills of counterfeit activity and piracy. To this end, we sign this Charter today and pledge the T&T Chamber's continued support, as we see this initiative as a major part of our Corporate Social Responsibility."

Director, Building Respect for IP Division, WIPO, Mr. Todd Reves, described the signing as "a pinnacle of the bold commitment that both the public and private sector has undertaken to protect creativity, innovation, and the integrity of markets that form the foundation of our global economy".

Referring to the Charter as ostensibly the first in the Caribbean, he said, "This Charter, as an initiative of WIPO, is grounded in the recognition that counterfeiting and piracy are not isolated issues, but global challenges that require global solutions."

Once fully implemented, Trinidad and Tobago's Anti-Counterfeiting and Anti-Piracy Charter is expected to be featured by WIPO's Building Respect for IP Division as a model for other nations.

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