



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

MEDIA RELEASE

Trade Minister Launches the Steelpan Tuner Apprenticeship Programme

March 21, 2025: The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has invested TT\$27 million on local apprenticeship programmes over the last three years. Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, made this announcement earlier today while delivering remarks at the official launch of the Steelpan Tuner Apprenticeship Programme at the Ministry of Trade and Industry's headquarters at Nicholas Towers Port of Spain.

The Steelpan Tuner Apprenticeship Programme is a pioneering initiative designed to preserve the art of steelpan tuning and boost the economic potential of the national instrument. During her address, Minister Gopee-Scoon reaffirmed Government's commitment to training and development in the non-energy sector, and pointed out that the apprenticeship programs funded by the Ministry of Trade and Industry extended beyond steelpan manufacturing and included other key areas of the non-energy sector.

The Minister commended the MIC-Institute of Technology for its role in formulating this Programme, which she described as an unprecedented exercise aimed at producing highly trained, certified steelpan tuners.

Fifteen (15) apprentices, between the ages of seventeen (17) and thirty-five (35), will be trained in the first cohort of the Steelpan Tuner Apprenticeship Programme at the MIC-IT Laventille Technology Center. The program will span four (4) semesters over a two (2) year period. In the first year, apprentices will be introduced to various academic courses, including Music Theory, and Design and Construction. During the second year, apprentices will be assigned to tuners to engage in the fundamental aspects of steelpan manufacturing, tuning, and blending, as they prepare for and participate in the Carnival season and Panorama competition with established steelbands.

Minister Gopee-Scoon pointed out that with the decline in the number of skilled tuners, there is an urgent need to pass on the knowledge and skills of this delicate craft to the next generation.

She highlighted other initiatives to boost the export of steelpans as part of the Government's broader vision for economic diversification, such as the Steelpan Manufacturing Grant Fund Facility. This initiative has led to a 72% increase in steelpan exports from 2020 to 2023 and has supported local businesses in reaching regional and international markets such as the USA, UK,



Corporate Communications Unit
Ministry of Trade and Industry
Levels 17, Nicholas Tower, 63-65 Independence Square, Port of Spain,
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

• Tel: (868) 623-2931-4ext 2722
• Email: mti-corporatecommunications@gov.tt

• Fax: (868) 627-8488
• Web: www.tradeind.gov.tt

Canada, and beyond. The Facility has already provided funding to nine businesses, enabling them to enhance their operations and become more competitive on the global stage.

The Minister encouraged aspiring tuners and those passionate about learning the craft to seize the opportunity presented by the Steelpan Tuner Apprenticeship Programme.

“The steelpan is not just part of our past; it is also integral to our future,” she said. “Together, we will ensure that the sound of the steelpan continues to resonate around the world for generations to come.”

In his comments, Professor Emeritus Clément Imbert, Chairman of the MIC-IT, described the merits of the two-year Apprenticeship Programme, and its emphasis on creating opportunities for entrepreneurship through the establishment of small to medium-sized steelpan manufacturing and tuning enterprises.

Also present at the launch were Mr. Videsh Maharaj, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts; Nathan Langaigne, General Manager, Training Division MIC-IT; Ms. Keiba Jacob Mottley, Chief Executive Officer of the National Carnival Commission; and Mr. Kwesi Moore, Public Relations Officer, Pan Trinbago.

- END -





Photo Caption: Senator the Honourable, Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry (centre), with Randall Karim, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade and Industry (far right), Keiba Jacob Mottley, CEO, National Carnival Commission (far left), Professor Clément Imbert, Deputy Chairman, Steelpan Steering Committee (centre), Kayle Noel, Steelpan Tuner (left of Minister), Ben Jackson, Programme Coordinator MIC-IT (right of Professor Imbert), Anthony Duncan, Steelpan Tuners Guild Representative (Playing steelpan), and Kaiijah Codrington, Steelpan Tuner (behind Mr. Karim).



Corporate Communications Unit
Ministry of Trade and Industry
Levels 17, Nicholas Tower, 63-65 Independence Square, Port of Spain,
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

- Tel: (868) 623-2931-4ext 2722
- Email: mti-corporatecommunications@gov.tt

- Fax: (868) 627-8488
- Web: www.tradeind.gov.tt