

SPEAKING NOTES

FOR

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE-SCOON

MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

AT

CHILE - TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PARTIAL SCOPE TRADE

AGREEMENT

SIGNING CEREMONY

25 APRIL, 2024

Salutations:

- Her Excellency Ms. Claudia Sanhueza, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile,
- His Excellency Colin Connelly, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Trinidad and Tobago to the Kingdom of Belgium and Trinidad and Tobago's Chief Negotiator
- His Excellency Hernán Núñez Montenegro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Chile to Trinidad and Tobago
- Mr. Randall Karim Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Trinidad and Tobago's Deputy Chief Negotiator
- Mr. Ricardo Mayer Bornand, Acting Director General of Bilateral Economic Affairs, Undersecretariat of International Economic Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile
- Technical Officers of Trinidad and Tobago and Chile
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Introduction

- It is an absolute honor to join you this morning at the Signing Ceremony for the Trinidad and Tobago - Chile Partial Scope Trade Agreement.
- Trinidad and Tobago and Chile share a longstanding relationship, founded on mutual respect, friendship, and cooperation. Just last year, we proudly celebrated 60 years of diplomatic relations—a milestone that speaks to the enduring strength and depth of our partnership.
- This Partial Scope Trade Agreement builds on that legacy, reflecting our shared commitment to openness, mutual prosperity, and lasting cooperation.
- The official visit of Trinidad and Tobago's former Prime Minister - Dr. Keith Rowley to Chile in May 2017 was the catalyst which resulted in the signing of the General Framework Agreement for negotiation and now, signature of this preferential trading Agreement.

- This agreement reflects a shared understanding – that in a world with increasing complexity, our cooperation is not a luxury, but a necessity. We live in a time where **global challenges require global solutions and beyond that meaningful partnerships.**
- This Agreement forms a key part of that solution, in response to the current global economic climate; concerning geopolitical relations; and disruptions in trading arrangements by seeking to diversify exports and strengthening commercial ties between two countries (one in the Caribbean and the other in South America).

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO EXPORTS UNDER THE AGREEMENT

- Ladies and Gentlemen, Chile is an important trading partner and a main Latin American market for Trinidad and Tobago
- The average total exports from T&T to Chile over the period 2020 to 2024 are estimated at approximately TT\$710.6 million per annum. This includes:
 - **Energy exports**, which averaged approximately TT\$706.3 million annually and

- **Non-energy exports**, which averaged approximately TT\$4.4 million annually.
- The Agreement provides for preferential market access for more of Trinidad and Tobago's exports. **More local goods will be allowed into Chile without incurring customs duties (i.e. zero duties) and** assist in Trinidad and Tobago's efforts to increase both energy and non-energy exports as part of the Government's continued trade expansion and economic diversification efforts.
- Specifically, the PSTA will provide local manufacturers with preferential access into Chile for products under 267 tariff lines. This essentially, **enables trade of more than 267 products, as multiple products can be covered under a single tariff line.**
- Within the framework of the Agreement 213 tariff lines for locally manufactured products will incur 0% duty into Chile

upon entry into force of the Agreement, following which products under 54 tariff lines will attain duty free treatment into Chile, after 3 years.

- This PSTA is an opportunity to provide products to Chile which has a market size of 19.66 million persons and the highest per-person income (GDP per capita) in Latin America and belongs to the category of high-income countries according to the World Bank. **The country therefore has a sizeable population with strong purchasing power.**
- Preferential Market Access treatment into Chile for Trinidad and Tobago's energy sector will be provided for items such as methanol; ammonia; LNG; aviation fuels; base oils; lubricants; propane; butane; and urea.

- In addition, the list of items from Trinidad and Tobago's non-energy sector covers duty free treatment for food and beverage, cosmetics, chemicals, construction, paper, fashion and energy industries. Specifically non-energy items include alcoholic beverages; juices; pasta; cocoa products; ketchup and other condiments; waters; concrete; clothing; cosmetics; Ferrous products; Fruits and Vegetables; as well as Door and Windows.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IMPORTS UNDER THE AGREEMENT

- Conversely, the average total imports sourced from Chile over the period 2020 to 2024 are estimated at approximately TT \$189 million annually. This shows interest among our domestic importers in having access to Chilean products. The PSTA will allow for reduced tariffs on products from Chile, under 143 tariff lines.

- However, I want to emphasize that trade is more than numbers. It's about people. It is the farmer whose crops will now find new markets; the manufacturer who gains access to new customers; and the importer that can source cheaper goods from better suppliers. The small business owner who dreams bigger because new opportunities have opened up; and the consumer who will enjoy more choice, better quality and cheaper food options.
- Hence, the areas such as tariff preferences, rules of origin and origin procedures, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade and trade facilitation, which are covered under the agreement, will be more than policy tools but will also pave the way for greater collaboration between the private sector of both nations.

Negotiating Teams

- At this moment I wish to thank all those who made this day possible—the tireless negotiators, the legal experts, the policymakers, colleagues within CARICOM; and the teams

on both sides who worked through long nights, tough issues, and competing interests to reach a balanced and fair outcome. Your dedication has laid the foundation for what we sign today.

- On behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago delegation, I wish to indicate that it has been a pleasure working with our Chilean counterparts. Whether discussions centered around finding a common ground or deliberations on diverging views, our engagements have consistently been marked by mutual respect and goodwill throughout the years.

Conclusion

- Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the first PSTA being signed by Chile in the Caribbean and the first for Trinidad and Tobago with a South American nation.

- Let this agreement serve not as a conclusion, but as a stepping stone toward deeper collaborations. A starting point for deepening diplomatic relations, strengthening commercial ties, and broader cooperation.
- On behalf of the Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago, I reiterate our commitment to deepening relations with Chile, as we put pen to paper, and sign Trinidad and Tobago - Chile Partial Scope Trade Agreement
- Thank You.