



MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

Trade Minister shares plans on the trade agenda across borders



Ms. Margaret Diop, Charge d'Affaires of the United States of America (2nd left) listens attentively to a point being made by Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry (r)

November 1, 2015:- Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry closed off her second month in office advancing the trade agenda across borders in meetings with high level representatives from the Embassies of the United States of America, China, Panama, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Guatemala on Thursday 29th and Friday 30th October, 2015 at her Port of Spain office.

Speaking to Ms. Margaret Diop, Charge d'Affaires of the **United States of America**, the Trade and Industry Minister shared the Government plans to 'consult with the local business stakeholders on expanding into CARICOM and Latin American markets on where **they** want to go'. In response, Ms.

Diop said of the trade relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and the United States that '*it is a great partnership*', noting that there is a keen level of interest by the United States in how this Government plans to pursue its diversification agenda.

The Trade Minister reiterated to His Excellency Huang Xingyuan, Ambassador of **the People's Republic of China** that '*we have a long and valued relationship; and one of the imperatives for us is improving our relationship through increased investments*'. His Excellency committed to China's willingness to assist Trinidad and Tobago in the areas of agriculture, financial services and tourism. The Minister invited the Ambassador to join her on a tour of Tamana InTech Park so that he may '*see first-hand the possibilities for business opportunities*' for Chinese firms.

Senator Gopee-Scoon's third meeting was held with Her Excellency Carmen Gabriela Menendez, Ambassador of the **Republic of Panama**, who said in her greeting that '*it is wonderful to fortify our relationship*'. Lengthy discussions were held on trade opportunities between both countries; with the Minister noting that '*we look forward to doing more with Panama, and strengthening our relationship and seeing the levels of trade improving*.' She further stated that '*we are looking for*

significant growth in the manufacturing and services sectors; we are encouraging our manufacturers to function at optimal levels and thus we must find the new markets for their goods and services’.

The final meeting was with members of the countries of **the Central American Integration System (SICA)**, including Her Excellency Carmen Gabriela Menendez, Ambassador of the Republic of **Panama**; Ms. Carmen Gil Erazo, Charge d’Affaires, Republic of **Costa Rica**; His Excellency Raymundo Rodriguez Diaz, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Republic of **El Salvador**; and His Excellency Ambassador Giovanni Rene Castillo Polanco, Ambassador of **Guatemala**. His Excellency Polanco stated that *‘we have a variety of opportunities to do something together’*; while Ms. Erazo echoed the sentiments stating that *‘our Government would like that our ties be strengthened’*. The message from the representative SICA members was clear in the Trade Minister’s words *‘we have to do a lot more together’*.

At all these meetings, the Minister was accompanied by Mr. Norris Herbert, Permanent Secretary (Ag.); Ms. Karlene Duncan, Deputy Permanent Secretary and Mrs. Racquel Moses, President, InvestTT Limited.

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