



Media Release

GOPEE-SCOON – ‘T&T IS THE PLACE TO DO BUSINESS’

March 03, 2016:- Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry had the pleasure of speaking at the Caribbean Business Leadership Forum, CEO’s Forum on Tuesday 1 March, 2016 at the Trinidad Hilton and Conference Centre. The Forum brought together business leaders in the region to discuss investment opportunities with discussions being held in areas such as power generation; water; manufacturing and energy.

In her Address, Senator Gopee-Scoon seized the opportunity to ‘sell’ Trinidad and Tobago as the ideal investment destination. She said ***‘Trinidad and Tobago is the place to do business and I welcome you!’*** She detailed the seven sectors for diversification and spoke briefly on the country’s competitive and geographical advantages; Government’s legislative and policy support for investment; the successful international companies that has invested and thrived in T&T; the infrastructure and supportive business environment and the skilled workforce available.

Minister noted that ***‘It is the Government’s intention to ensure that opportunities abound in the face of economic challenges, which the world faces. The economic reality of low oil and gas prices is before us and it cannot be business as usual. Our focus on the seven sectors will therefore be strategic and holistic. Every country, every region has had its challenges – social, political and economic. However, the key to overcoming these challenges are vision, dedication and collaboration, which oftentimes can only be imagined and realized through the efforts of strong, steadfast business leaders like you; leaders who are willing to take risks and create opportunities for others.’***

Feature speaker Mr. Kennedy Bugane, Chief Executive Officer, Pembani Group Proprietary Limited highlighted the factors that led to the ‘rise’ of Africa’s economy and the investment opportunities available. He said ***‘Africa is a continent of growth and opportunity today and we look forward to partnering with businesses in the Caribbean.’***

Mr. Roopnarine Oumade Singh, Executive Director, Republic Bank Limited in his Remarks said ***'diversification is the only way modern economies hoped to survive. In the face of prevailing economic trends there has never been a more pressing need for greater connectivity among our leaders and this forum provides that platform for a wide cross-section of leaders representing various industries'***

Dr. Thackwray Driver, Chief Executive Officer, the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago in his presentation spoke highly of the local energy sector stating ***'we continue to invest heavily in education and in our labour force particularly our drillers; we have strong local service companies serving the industry; we are open to direct foreign investment; and we place significant emphasis on safety'***

Mr. Arthur Lok Jack, Chairman Associated Brands Industries Limited provided an overview of the evolution of the manufacturing sector in Trinidad and Tobago and called for the commencement of trade missions to South Africa to explore export possibilities.