



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

# Media Release

## SENATOR GOPEE-SCOON - 'GOVERNMENT IS WORKING TO DEVELOP THE MARITIME INDUSTRY'

**October 17, 2016:-** *'The shipping industry is quite extraordinary. It provides a significant level of employment, generates foreign exchange and contributes to the gross domestic product of almost every country'*, said Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry during the Keynote Address at the Opening Ceremony of the Caribbean Shipping Association (CSA) Annual General Meeting, Conference and Exhibition on Monday 17 October, 2016 . Minister Gopee-Scoon noted the importance of the industry to business stating *'the industry connects countries, markets and businesses and facilitates the efficient movement of goods on an ever-increasing scale. For us in the Caribbean, sea connectivity remains crucial for our multiple island states whose economic development pivots on the efficient, reliable sea lines to facilitate the movement of goods, people and services'*

Senator Gopee-Scoon asserted that intra-regional trade has often been stymied by the high costs of moving goods due to poor connectivity and internal inefficiencies and urged all stakeholders to aim to reduce the cost of shipping within the Caribbean region which will ultimately lead to a reduction in the cost of these goods in our markets and therefore result in a growth in intra-regional trade. She informed the audience that the Official Policy Framework of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has identified Maritime Services as one of the sectors for further development which include the areas of Ship Repair and Dry Docking, Bunkering, Cold Stacking, Transshipment, Yachting and Marina Development. Minister Gopee-Scoon identified one of the untapped areas for development in the maritime sector. She said *'it is estimated that the commercial ship repair and dry docking sub-sector currently generates an average of TT\$200 million in revenue annually*



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**and directly employs over 300 persons. The local industry has the capacity to complete approximately 200 repairs annually, but over 600 enquires are received. There is excess demand for repair and dry docking services and the potential to increase revenue in the local industry by at least TT\$400 million annually. However, the capacity in the industry will first have to be increased by upgrading existing facilities and developing new and modernized ones!** She gave the assurance that the Government is keen on ensuring an inclusive, multi-pronged approach in order to advance and develop the maritime sector.

The Minister lauded the capacity-building thrust of the Centre for Maritime Studies at the University of Trinidad and Tobago and informed of a maritime apprenticeship programme that will be geared towards providing vocational skilled labour to the industry. Such a programme would be of benefit to young people in the Carenage and Chaguaramas areas, among others.

Mr. David Jean-Marie, President, Caribbean Shipping Association (CSA) in his Opening Remarks challenged the members of the CSA to **'show the world we are ready and able to evolve to provide a service that is comparable internationally. It is up to us the strategists and innovators to make the industry work efficiently in this shifting paradigm!**