



# Media Release

## T&T COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING RELATIONS WITH THE EU

**December 14, 2016:-** Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry and Senior Representatives from the Ministry met with European Union Heads of Mission led by Ambassador Arend Biesebroek, Head of the European Union (EU) Delegation to Trinidad and Tobago, on Monday December 12th 2016, at the Ministry's Head Office, Port-of-Spain. The meeting was held with the intention of furthering collaboration with the Member States of EU in the field of economic diplomacy aimed at promoting trade, investment and strengthening the relationship between the private sector in Trinidad and Tobago and the EU.

The Minister underscored the importance of the manufacturing sector and outlined the areas targeted for diversification of the economy – agriculture including cocoa, tourism, ICT, financial services, maritime and creative industries. In respect of the maritime and creative industries for which the Ministry has direct responsibility, the Minister mentioned the establishment of the Standing Committee for the Development of the Maritime Sector with a focus, inter alia, on ship repair and dry docking, bunkering, cold stacking, transshipment, yachting and marina development in both Trinidad and Tobago. She said ***'with respect to the creative industries, the Government is committed to creating an environment to grow and develop the film, music and fashion industries, as such, plans are currently being developed for the film and music industries which will map the direction of these industries for the next five years, while the plan for the fashion industry is currently being implemented'***

The EU representatives welcomed the opportunity to cooperate with Trinidad and Tobago to further the development of the sectors highlighted. Discussions were also centered on ways of improving trade between Trinidad and Tobago and EU Member States in the context of the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership

Agreement (EPA) as it relates to market access for goods as well as services. Minister Gopee-Scoon referred to Trinidad and Tobago's initiatives with respect to export development and market penetration and targeted markets of interest including the diaspora markets such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada.

Some of the key issues arising from the recent Sixth Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee related to the implementation of the EPA were highlighted such as enhancing the trade in services, funding under the European Development Programmes (EDF) for EPA implementation, agriculture and fishing, and the negotiations aimed at an agreement on the protection of geographical indications which are expected to conclude in mid-2017.

Minister Gopee-Scoon also informed the delegation of the completion of the first phase of the Tamana InTech Park where there are currently 20 lots available for investment. The areas of focus for the park are: ICT, Innovation, Animation and High Value Manufacturing.

The meeting ended with both parties acknowledging the valuable exchange of views and the avenues identified for further cooperation towards increased trade and investment.

The EU delegation comprised five (5) European Heads of Mission accredited to Trinidad and Tobago (including United Kingdom, France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Spain); the Regional Trade Affairs Manager and the Trade Officer from the EU Delegation to Barbados; the Project Officer; a Junior EU Professional; and the Head of the European Business Chamber in Trinidad and Tobago.