



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

MEDIA LAUNCH OF THE ULTRA BESPOKE TAILORING PROGRAMME

FASHIONTT

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REMARKS

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE SCOON
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

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15TH NOVEMBER, 2017

A pleasant good afternoon to you all.

I wish to express my appreciation to everyone involved in this initiative which will bring to fruition the Certificate Programme in Ultra Bespoke Tailoring under the guidance of renowned Professor Andrew Ramroop of the famed Savile Row Academy. Today's launch therefore marks a milestone for the local tailoring industry and is the result of the concerted efforts of CreativeTT through its subsidiary FashionTT, MIC Institute of Technology and staff at the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

This project takes us one step further from our reliance on oil and gas and one step closer to harnessing the talents of our creative sector, specifically those within the Fashion Industry. We are today creating opportunities for our existing and potential designers, dress makers, tailors and many others in the fashion value chain.

For a number of years, we have depended on revenues generated from the energy sector to fuel economic growth and development. Recent changes in the global economic landscape have compelled us to re-examine our development focus.

Government's National Development Strategy 2016-2030, more commonly known as Vision 2030, is the roadmap to guide the country towards socio-economic prosperity and ultimately achieve developed country status by the year 2030.

This Government, through several Ministries and Agencies, has placed significant emphasis on the themes 'Putting People First' and 'Building Globally Competitive Businesses', particularly through its support for entrepreneurship and diversification efforts.

Vision 2030 mandates us to improve skills upgrade, training and knowledge of up-to-date teaching methods, particularly those that support innovation and entrepreneurship. It envisages Trinidad and Tobago becoming more competitive through such an upgrade of workforce skills and through the creation of an environment in which citizens can combine their talents, skills, ideas and imagination towards realising their potential.

We recognize the potential of the Creative Industries to contribute to income generation, job creation and also, as foreign exchange earners. The local Fashion Industry is a priority and Government remains fully committed to the development and commercialization of this subsector.

The global Fashion Industry, in 2016, was estimated to have been valued at US\$ 2.4 trillion. The Ultra Bespoke Tailoring Programme when completed, will equip successful participants with the tools to compete favourably in the global fashion industry.

Participants in the Programme will benefit from training administered by the Principal of the world renowned Savile Row Academy based in London. This Master Tailor has over 40 years' experience in the Fashion Industry with 12 years teaching design, pattern cutting, fitting and tailoring at the London College of Fashion. Participants will therefore develop specialist skills and work-ready training for their progression to the highest levels of the tailoring and fashion related industries.

The local products emanating from this quality of training will now be linked to the Savile Row brand which is associated internationally with painstaking attention to detail, unsurpassed quality and elegance. This Programme will therefore ensure that our local fashion products meet and maintain those international standards thereby enabling our tailoring sector to attain world class standards. Additionally, the local economy will also benefit from the industry's expansion as it will create sustainable employment and generate increased foreign exchange earnings.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry remains committed to the development of the Fashion Industry. Under the umbrella of the Trinidad and Tobago Creative Industries Company - CreativeTT, FashionTT is overseeing various capacity building programmes developed to assist our local designers with the penetration of international markets. One current project, being implemented in collaboration with the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), is the establishment of a Garment Production Facility. This facility is intended to increase the production capacity of local fashion designers and their ability to accommodate large orders from international buyers.

Another programme is the Fashion Value Chain Investment Programme (FVCIP), which is improving the value chain elements in local fashion firms by refining their in-house performance or outsourcing some of their operations.

The Government also understands that one of the challenges which has hindered the development of small businesses, including the majority comprising the local Fashion industry, is limited access to financing. To address this challenge and assist small business owners and entrepreneurs, I am pleased to say that, earlier this month, a new Export Grant Facility and an enhanced Research and Development Fund were launched. The Export Grant targets small and medium sized manufacturers and provides each applicant with financing up to a maximum of \$250,000 for machinery and equipment for production of export oriented items. Manufacturing of leather and craft products, textile, garments, footwear and headwear have been included among the priority sectors for accessing this facility. The Research and Development Facility provides tiered funding for the successful market entry of innovative, technology driven business ideas in the creative and other sectors up to a maximum of \$1 million per beneficiary.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the current economic circumstances, I wish to emphasize that the Government continues to create an enabling environment for the expansion of the non-energy sector and growth of trade and development, for a sustainable tomorrow. This Ultra Bespoke Tailoring Certificate Programme is one of many initiatives announced by the current administration which possesses immeasurable potential. I am heartened and encouraged that we are able to bring such a prestigious training programme from the Savile Row Academy, delivered in customized training facilities, to our shores under the tutelage of a skilled master tailor and son of the soil. This is an exciting moment and I wish to encourage persons to make use of the state's investment designed to create far reaching opportunities in the fashion industry.

I thank you.