



Media Release

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS COCOA FARMERS' BID TO ENTER GLOBAL COCOA INDUSTRY

May 24, 2018:- Minister of Trade and Industry Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon presented the Montserrat Cocoa Farmers' Co-operative with \$50,000 to support their efforts to gain international recognition for their intellectual property through Geographical Indication (GI) registration for "Trinidad Montserrat Hills Cocoa." Mr Christopher Paul, President of the Co-operative received the grant at exporTT's Cocoa Value Add Meeting on Wednesday at Export House in Port of Spain. GI is ascribed to a product based on unique qualities attributable to the product's origin. It affords an invaluable opportunity at product differentiation and increases competitiveness of such products in international markets. The cocoa industry is estimated at 100 billion US dollars internationally and is projected to grow by about 20% in the next ten years.

According to Senator Gopee-Scoon, ***"if we are to transform economic activity in the sector to reach and surpass past performance we must consider and exploit every single segment of the value chain. We must promote, advocate and achieve not only increased production but value added solutions and inventive development of industry."***

At the event the Minister of Trade and Industry challenged local cocoa entrepreneurs to exploit the multi-billion dollar cocoa industry where there are a variety of opportunities in the production of high value added cocoa and chocolates. Trinidad and Tobago's entrepreneurs have already showcased innovation in their packaging, their flavour profiles, and product marketing and have been recognised for these efforts.

Citing the country's competitive advantage the Minister stated ***"We are home to the most successful propagating programmes and one of the most prestigious cocoa research centres. With these resources, we must now, more than ever, capitalise on an industry with the capacity for both exponential growth and massive foreign exchange earnings."***

Mr Ashmeer Mohamed, Chairman of exporTT, the funding agency for the Co-operative's GI application, articulated the intent behind the initiative. ***"We are positioning our intellectual property rights to concur with fourth industrial revolution. It will also encourage Agri GI Tourism and provide intellectual protection to the Montserrat Hills Cocoa and benefits all the farmers of the Co-operative."***

The Co-operative is in the third and final stage of obtaining its international GI recognition. It has already distinguished its cocoa from others globally through certification by the Cocoa Research Centre at the University of the West Indies and obtained certification through the Intellectual Property Office at the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs regarding its flavour profile which is unique to the region.

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