



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

*Official Opening of Domus
Windows & Doors Limited
Factory*

REMARKS

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE-SCOON
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

FEBRUARY 19, 2019, 10:00 a.m.
#57 FACTORY ROAD, CHAGUANAS

Salutations

- Dr the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago
- Major General the Honourable Edmond Dillon, Minister of Housing and Urban Development
- Mr Robert Perrin, Chairman, Domus Windows and Doors Limited and members of the Board
- Mr Terrence Ortt, Chief Executive Officer, Domus Windows and Doors Limited and members of the Executive team
- Mr Debideen Manick, Deputy Mayor of Chaguanas
- Mr Newman George, Chairman, Housing Development Corporation
- Ms Janelle Commissiong, Mr Bevan Narinesingh, Mr Gerry Noel, Directors, InvesTT
- Mr Christopher Lewis, President, InvesTT
- Mr Brent Lyons, Acting Managing Director, HDC
- Captains of Industry, Ronald Harford, Mr Arthur Lok Jack
- Government representatives including those from state agencies (eTeck, UdeCOTT, ExporTT, InvesTT)
- Deacon Simon Rostant, St. Phillip & St. James RC Church
- Members of the media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all.

It is a distinct pleasure to address you this morning.

This occasion is indeed significant as we commemorate the formal opening of this new state-of-the art manufacturing facility in Central Trinidad. Domus' leadership must be commended for bringing this business to Trinidad and Tobago and for investing more than TT\$50 million to ensure that only first class products leave the doors of this factory. The vision, persistence and tenacity of Mr Terrence Ortt and the executive team at Domus must be acknowledged. We appreciate the confidence which you have demonstrated in our country.

Allow me to center the occasion

Upon entering Office, this Administration had the unenviable task of firstly, stabilizing the economy and secondly, settling in on a growth trajectory. Well established, is that in 2015 the economy was in a state of total disrepair with a recession in effect, worsened by the pilfering and misappropriation of State funds.

Under the strong leadership of this Government and with the support of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, the economy has been stabilized and we are on our way to some measure of growth. However, we remain susceptible to the vagaries of world energy prices.

But what does this say to us? In essence, we must be mindful that the energy sector will always have some level of dominance in the economy, but we must adopt the necessary strategies and actions to accelerate diversification and growth of the non-energy sector; while at the same time improving efficiencies; if we are to compete with markets that are thinking the same way, we are.

Manufacturing & Technology

In this regard, manufacturing remains an important pillar of our economy creating a sure path to some measure of economic prosperity, through its influence on infrastructure development, job creation, and foreign exchange earnings.

Notably, in 2018, the Manufacturing Sector contributed just over TT\$32 billion (or 20%) to the overall GDP with growth recorded in the subsectors of Food and Beverages (5.6%); Textiles, wood, paper and printing (1.5%); and Petroleum and chemical products (9%).

The overall goal is to “develop a Manufacturing Sector that is globally competitive, productive and innovative, utilizing advanced technologies and environmentally friendly practices”.

This objective is in keeping with the Government’s National Development Strategy 2016-2030/Vision 2030, in particular Theme IV – Building Globally Competitive Businesses. As such, the Draft Policy for the Manufacturing sector will seek to:

- i. Enhance human resource capacity in the sector;
- ii. Address administrative, capacity and institutional constraints;
- iii. Support and encourage research, development and innovation to promote high-value manufacturing;
- iv. Improve access to finance for MSMEs in the manufacturing sector; and
- v. Strengthen strategic partnerships among public and private sector stakeholders.

These strategies are in line with global standards and are geared towards improving 10 priority sub-sectors identified as having the greatest export potential namely:

- Ferrous and non-ferrous metals including aluminium
- Other Food Products including manufacturing inputs (soya bean)
- Beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic)
- Paper Products (environmentally friendly)
- Plastics & Rubber
- Glass articles; and
- Wood Products.

Special Economic Zones and Industrial Parks

If Trinidad and Tobago is to remain competitive, investment in cutting-edge technology, high value production and export-led growth practices are a must. A key aspect of enhancing competitiveness is the development of strategic spaces through which investors can build factories and offices to create goods and services for local and international consumption. And in that regard, I am pleased to report that work which commenced last year on the Moruga Agro-processing and Light Industrial Park and the development of the Phoenix Park Industrial Estate (PPIE), are progressing. The Phoenix Park Industrial Estate which is strategically located close to the Port of Point Lisas will offer manufacturers an area of 133 acres with some 70 plots of varying sizes.

In fact, the Commercial Agreement between eTecK and Beijing Construction Engineering Group (BCEG) for the construction of this Park will be signed tomorrow and this marks another milestone for this important project.

Work is also progressing on our Special Economic Zone Policy ensuring while Trinidad and Tobago particularizes our investment incentives and criteria whilst ensuring that we are in compliance with international standards including that of the OECD.

It is vital to factor in the impact of technology. As we are all aware, the global economy has already entered a phase where the pace of technological change is transforming the manufacturing environment.

Technology-intensive manufacturing that employs smart automation, advanced robotics and 3-D printing have begun to dominate the landscape; and firms that employ such an approach are at the forefront of their fields.

In order to stay relevant and to seize new opportunities, local companies must be ready to adopt the latest manufacturing technologies.

For this reason, Domus must be applauded for utilising state-of-the-art Computer Integrated Manufacturing systems and business processes. This is something manufacturers alike should seek to emulate.

Fair Trading, Quality & Standards

While we look towards advancing all sectors, the Government has an important role in ensuring a level playing field in which firms can compete. This is achieved through the creation of a legislative, institutional and policy framework to allow our high quality products and services to meet international standards.

To ensure a fair and competitive market place, an important tool is the work of the Fair Trading Commission which is to administer and enforce legislation that safeguards against certain unfair trade practices; by seeking to ensure that all legitimate business enterprises observe standards of conduct for the purposes of ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Fair Trading Act. The TTFTC stands ready to provide guidance to all, with a view to enhancing competitiveness in the economy.

In our stakeholder consultations, the MTI discovered that the main obstacle to establishing market presence had to do with quality and in particular, enforcement, awareness, and among other elements, the burden to private firms in terms of certification and accreditation. Our National Quality Policy which aims to build the reputation of domestic manufacturers and service providers so as to attain long-term competitiveness and growth further developing export-led trade, is currently being implemented.

A National Quality Council will be established within the next few weeks with all the key stakeholders on board.

Additionally, local companies and organizations will eventually enjoy certification and accreditation services from an independent national accreditation body, the Trinidad and Tobago Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment. This initiative, will certainly reduce cost to manufacturers as it is expected that more accredited conformity assessment bodies, will be available and accessible, locally, to facilitate manufacturers in meeting international standards.

A fundamental aspect to guaranteeing quality goods and services is to embrace a quality culture, and to this end,

let me therefore recognize Domus' commitment to exacting standards of quality by having their manufactured products satisfy International Standardized testing methods for safety and performance under stressful Hurricane and Windborne Debris Conditions. These active international standards, namely (ASTM E 1886) and (ASTM E 1996), add value to the quality of the product as well as build consumer confidence.

Single Electronic Window for Trade and Business Facilitation

We are well aware of the challenges faced by Domus; the MTI, and the relevant agencies in order to see the project through took a "hands on" approach to ensure that the investment was fulfilled.

This is the approach that is required whilst we de-bureaucratize, and simplify investment facilitation and in particular, improve the efficiency of our trade processes.

Over the last three years, focus has been placed on the strengthening and expansion of the Single Electronic Window (SEW) for Trade and Business Facilitation – TTBizLink. The expected outcomes of this project are enhanced trade performance and competitiveness, improved coordination and interoperability between Government agencies and in the future, its main international trading partners. Several consultancies have been completed and several others are ongoing, all of which focus on:

- Enhancing and expanding the services of the Single Electronic Window, including business process reengineering. This will upgrade the current TTBizLink to international best practices.
- Enhancing the Interoperability of TTBizLink, which will facilitate the exchange and analysis of data between TTBizLink and the information systems of key stakeholders as well as the information systems of strategic trading partners of Trinidad and Tobago.
- Modernizing the Legislative, Institutional Framework for International Trade and Institutional Governance of the SEW, which will address the deficiencies in the legislative framework and strengthen the institutional governance of the SEW.

Despite the progress made since its initial introduction in 2009, there still remains bottlenecks which must be removed. Let me acknowledge the ongoing work and collaboration with other Ministries such as the Ministry of Finance, Works and Transport, Planning and Development, the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs and relevant agencies, in enhancing the SEW.

Conclusion

These are but a few initiatives of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and by extension the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in promoting and fostering business growth in an effort to further develop the economy. We thank everyone here for their support and commitment in making today a reality. This investment is one of many, and a sure sign of Trinidad and Tobago's transition from a regional powerhouse to an international model of growth, innovation and prosperity.

I thank you.

