



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

*National Petroleum
Marketing Company (NP)
Fuel Verification Launch*

REMARKS

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

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N.P. MUNROE ROAD, CHARLIEVILLE

Good morning to you all!

It really gives me great pleasure to address you today, at this event which commemorates the ongoing verification of fuel dispensers which started in 2018. NP Service Stations commenced this activity in January, 2019 and as a major fuel distributor in Trinidad and Tobago NPs participation is indeed significant. I take this opportunity to congratulate the company for embracing this invaluable regulatory activity.

I understand, that to date, twenty-seven (27) NP Service Stations have been verified, nineteen (19) in January and eight (8) during the current month and it is projected by June, 2019, that the remaining fuel dispensers at all NP service stations throughout Trinidad and Tobago will in fact be verified. This would conclude the nationwide fuel verification exercise Trinidad and Tobago which commenced in 2018 ultimately bringing an improvement in the quality of fuel provided by stations operating in the country. The national community is advised that in order to ensure that the desired quantity of fuel is dispensed, and consumers receive value each time they visit the pumps, continuous monitoring would be essential. Therefore this verification exercise will continue on a six month rotation cycle over the next few years.

As the line Minister with responsibility for the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), which is the agency leading this exercise, I am particularly pleased to support activities undertaken to advance this notion of quality in the national psyche. One area which is of particular importance is the Metrology Act No. 18 of 2004 which has given authority to the Legal Metrology Inspectorate (LMI) at the TTBS. The LMI is responsible for monitoring and verifying prescribed measuring devices used in trade including in this instance fuel dispensers to ensure the accuracy of fuel distributed by our service stations. The importance of local measurement in this scenario is to ensure that international standards in terms of mass and weight etc are adhered to. It is critical for the development of our country, that we manage our metrology

programme to promote greater confidence in the measurements performed and to increase trust between businesses and their clients.

From a trade and commerce perspective, consumers and traders make decisions based on measurement results daily; measurements that affect economic and personal well-being. A society therefore must have confidence in its measurements. The work being undertaken by the LMI in this context ensures that the fuel dispensed from each nozzle is within the acceptable tolerance, that the motoring public continually receives accurate results.

In this regulatory process the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is keen to ensure that the TTBS performs an effective role in the interface between consumers and sellers thereby ensuring fair trade and overall protection of the society at large. In striking this delicate balance the TTBS will be seeking to safeguard the interest of the various stakeholders, that is, on the one hand the ability of service stations to provide their products, gasoline etc at a fair reflection of prices and on the other hand consumers purchasing these items will receive value for monies paid. In this regard, the various pumps and nozzles must always be calibrated in furtherance of this twin objective.

This verification exercise fits into the TTBS' wider focus on providing internationally recognized metrology services, standards, inspection, testing, certification and accreditation and is but a microcosm of work being undertaken to establish what is called the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI). This NQI is a highly integrated network of people, systems and organizations involved in the research, definition, development and promotion of quality goods, services and processes using four pillars including metrology. This is a national network, which requires both the cooperation and commitment of public and private institutions, and the regulatory framework within which they operate. All components the National Quality Infrastructure are essential to production and trade. The National Petroleum Company and other similar stakeholders are very much part of this national network.

The NQI, as it's called, is an element of the National Quality Policy (NQP) approved by Cabinet in April, 2018. This NQP seeks to promote a quality culture in Trinidad and Tobago and in particular among many institutions on which our daily lives depend. As a developing country seeking to make our mark in the international economic environment the establishment of this quality culture will ultimately support the diversification and the growth of the economy, improve productivity, increase safety and security, protect the environment, and contribute to the long-term well-being of all citizens. This NQP, therefore seeks to guide the integration and coordination of Trinidad and Tobago's National Quality Infrastructure. Additionally, the policy will also aid local businesses with, increasing productivity, innovation, competitiveness and their ability to participate in local, regional and global markets by meeting international standards and requirements.

It is aimed at overcoming the difficulty of local firms in demonstrating compliance with quality requirements and trade rules. It is anticipated that the NQP's implementation will build specialist capabilities and enhance resources in quality related areas. The policy will also develop and enforce technical regulations and practices which support the production and creation of high quality goods and services; ultimately leading to an environment where the quality of goods and services being traded in Trinidad and Tobago is improved.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry has supported the TTBS' efforts to ensure the implementation the NQP with the most recent deliverable being the approval by Cabinet of the establishment of the Trinidad and Tobago Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment. This is an independent national accreditation body that will accredit companies and organisations that provide testing, calibration and certification services according to international standards.

The main benefit being that conformity services would be transparent, trustworthy and internationally acceptable. Other activities earmarked for the TTBS for 2019 include the establishment of the National Quality Council by June 2019, commencement of the accreditation of laboratories and the implementation of a national standardization strategy for promotion of education among the wider public. The Government also proposes to pursue the amendment of the existing Standards Act to align with international trends by 2020.

Consumers therefore are advised when purchasing fuel to check the pumps for the bright yellow fuel verification sticker, which will indicate that the pump being utilised has been verified and is accurately dispensing fuel. This awareness and capacity building are indicative of and also promote a quality culture.

I trust that the strides made in the past few months in particular, will assist in enhancing consumer protection and also level the playing field in commercial transactions this is in sync with the National Consumer Policy recently approved by the Cabinet. Measurement is an important part of all societies and effective trade requires transparency, a balance of information and trust between traders and consumers.

As you have been made aware by previous contributions, metrology through the Metrology Act will provide the quality reference point for the exchange of goods and services.

The Government, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry will continue its support to the TTBS as it seeks to continue to verify fuel dispensers but also looks forward to the sustained verification of other devices pertinent to local businesses and consumers including supermarket weights and scales.

As of today numerous scales across Trinidad and Tobago have been verified including mini-mart scales, supermarket scales, courier scales, baggage scales at the airport, hardware scales and food sold by weight scales which have assisted the public and consumers in receiving accurate and better value for money. We look forward to the verification of market scales which I understand will be initiated in the latter half of 2019.

I thank all of you present I look forward to the conclusion of this verification exercise.