



Media Release

TRADE MINISTER OPENS LOCAL CHOCOLATE SHOP AT HILTON

April 24, 2019:- Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, on Thursday April 18, 2019, formally opened The Chocolate Box, Trinidad and Tobago Fine Cocoa Company's first store front location at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre. According to the Minister, ***"This venture will contribute to the GDP of the country, create employment and earn foreign exchange flows from exports. The opening of this outlet is part of broader efforts to revitalize and expand both the cocoa and chocolate industries in Trinidad and Tobago."*** The chocolate retail outlet offers handcrafted, high quality chocolates produced locally utilising Trinitario Cocoa sourced from 20 estates around Trinidad and Tobago.

Citing opportunities for job creation and revenue from exports the Minister lauded the company for tapping into a market which was valued at USD \$103 billion in 2017 and expected to increase to USD \$162 billion by 2024. The Trade and Industry Minister stated that ***"These operations combine all elements along the cocoa value chain and provide an excellent example of the application of innovation and technology to add value along each stage of chocolate production from bean to bar in growing this very important sector in Trinidad and Tobago."***

The opening highlighted the work undertaken by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to grow downstream agro-processing in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr Ashley Parasram, Director at the Trinidad and Tobago Fine Cocoa Company, thanked the Government and its agencies including exporTT and InvesTT for the support provided to bring the idea to fruition.

Mr Winston Rudder, Chairman of the Cocoa Development Company who was also present at the event stated that Trinidad and Tobago is well positioned to penetrate the international market having retained its status as a fine or flavour cocoa destination at the recent meeting of the International Cocoa Organisation.

The Chocolate Box is an example of the fine or flavour cocoa sector developing into a value added chocolate experience for local and international markets. Through its partnership with the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre products proudly made in Trinidad and Tobago are available to locals and visitors.

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