



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

# Media Release

## T&T'S FASHION INDUSTRY GAINS NEW BESPOKE TAILORS

**July 30, 2019:-** Trinidad and Tobago's fashion industry can proudly boast of having its first cohort of Bespoke tailors from the One Year Certificate Programme in Ultra Bespoke Tailoring, Pattern Drafting, Cutting and Fitting. The Programme was introduced in 2018 in keeping with the Government's mandate to build export capacity in the fashion industry and successfully position products made in Trinidad and Tobago in international markets. Its implementation was the outcome of collaboration led by FashionTT with the MIC Institute of Technology and the Savile Row Academy of the United Kingdom. The National Training Agency (NTA) also provided valuable guidance. Twenty-six (26) students graduated from the programme which was facilitated by Professor Andrew Ramroop, Principal of the Savile Row Academy. Graduates received their certificates on Monday 29 July, 2019 at the Trinidad Hilton and Conference Centre and treated those in attendance to a showcase of their sartorial art, further details of which are featured in the Sartorial Art 2019 Lookbook also available at <http://www.fashiontt.co.tt/fashion-tt/sartorial-art->.

Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry in offering her congratulations, expressed confidence that the acquisition of the new skills by the graduates, will inevitably lead to increased commercialization, export development of the local fashion industry and a meaningful contribution to the diversification of the economy. Acknowledging that micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) contribute approximately 28% to Trinidad and Tobago's GDP, Minister Gopee-Scoon underscored the Government's commitment to creating an enabling environment to encourage entrepreneurial efforts and develop micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and to give direction.



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Citing the facilities available to assist MSMEs' growth and development, she said, ***“should you need financial assistance, the Export Grant Facility and the enhanced Research and Development Fund are available for those who are able to meet the requirements”***. The Export Grant Facility provides financing up to a maximum of \$250,000 for machinery and equipment for production of export oriented items, including the manufacturing of leather and craft products, textile, garments, footwear and headwear. The Research and Development Facility provides tiered funding up to a maximum of \$1 million per beneficiary, for the successful market entry of innovative, technology driven business ideas in the creative and other sectors. The entrepreneurs were challenged to adopt a research posture in order to identify new product and business prospects and take advantage of all the opportunities that are open to them. FashionTT's Value Chain Investment Programme (VCIP) was also highlighted.

Professor Andrew Ramroop, Principal, Savile Row Academy and Programme facilitator expressed satisfaction for the opportunity to invest in each student, the value of *“fashionomics”* which he said ***“entailed not only ensuring a high level of knowledge and skills were attained but that financial success was also acquired”***. He cautioned the graduates to avoid reversing to previous, old speed sewing habits and always to work towards excellence and professionalism.

Professor Clement Imbert, Chairman of MIC Institute of Technology congratulated all stakeholders for making the initiative a success. Professor Imbert noted that the programme was aimed at not only building the students' technical capacity but enhancing their entrepreneurial skills, a component provided by MIC. He encouraged graduates to commercialise their trade to ensure their personal contribution to T&T's economy and the growth and development of the fashion sector.

Mr. Jason Lindsay, Chairman of FashionTT, described the programme as a “milestone” achievement for the industry and the Caribbean. He noted that the programme has given the graduates a gateway to ***“creative cultural expression”*** through garment production. He said, ***“FashionTT is focused on building strategy into our raw talent and cultural expressions to be a mechanism for trade, commercial activity and professional growth”***. He added that the programme, has already seen benefits from concept to commercialisation domestically, regionally and internationally with several of the suits which were designed during the programme already being sold.

Mr. Andre Cournand, Class Valedictorian and also the youngest graduate of the programme expressed pleasure to contribute to the diversification of the economy and the revitalizing of the garment industry along with his fellow Bespoke tailors.

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