



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

Media Release

BUILDING REGIONAL TRADE PROFESSIONALS' CAPACITY

July 29, 2019: - Twenty two (22) trade technocrats from twelve (12) regional countries have successfully completed the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 8 week Regional Trade Policy Course (RTPC) for Caribbean Members and Observers. Speaking to the participants at the Closing Ceremony on Friday 26 July, 2019 Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry reminded the graduates of their role, she said ***"Having completed this programme, you are now partners in the transformation of your economies and your role is significant as we move forward to enhance our trade capabilities to benefit the growth and expansion of our economies"***.

The Trade and Industry Minister reiterated the importance of such programmes which serve to build technical capacity. She said ***"we as a Region must not fail to recognize the key role that technical assistance and capacity building provided by the WTO can have in shaping our countries' trade policies and practices"***. She urged participants of the course to not only apply the knowledge learnt over the two (2) month period but to continue to follow the ongoing developments at the WTO. She stated ***"It is imperative that you continue to assess the state of negotiations and the implications for the Region to arrive at clear positions to guide your delegations in Geneva. As professionals representing small developing countries, your participation and involvement in future activities of the WTO will be of tremendous importance"***.



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Minister Gopee-Scoon made special mention of the four (4) participants representing Trinidad and Tobago whose additional knowledge and competencies will essentially improve the capacity and technical expertise available to the trade sector in Trinidad and Tobago. ***“You are now more equipped to actively pursue discussions at the WTO and to ensure that our trade policies and practices are in compliance with the WTO’s legal framework”***; she added. The Trade and Industry Minister gave the commitment of the Ministry of Trade and Industry to assist and champion greater national participation in the programme which will be hosted in Trinidad and Tobago for similar periods over the next two years.

Mr. Frederick Y. Agah, Deputy Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO), underscored the importance of trade-related technical assistance and capacity building programmes for Members and Observers at the WTO. He said, ***“a well-functioning multilateral trading system does not only require strengthened trading rules that are non-discriminatory and fair but requires a clear understanding, by its Members and Observers of the opportunities which those rules provide.”*** He expressed confidence that participants will become leading trade negotiators and advisors for their countries and through their work and contributions will achieve an inclusive multilateral trading system that enables all Members to realise their trade and development aspirations.

Professor Brian Copeland, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal, UWI expressed honour for the University St Augustine Campus to be selected to serve as the institution to host the programme. He noted that the integrated approach to sustainable capacity-building is a long established and successful one by the WTO and is endorsed by the UWI.

The two-month RTPC is a collaboration between the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the University of the West Indies and the World Trade Organisation. Its main objective is to give participants a deeper understanding of the WTO Agreements, the functioning of the WTO, its rules and procedures.

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