



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

Services Go Global (Tourism Sector)

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FEATURE ADDRESS

MS. FRANCES SEIGNORET, PERMANENT SECRETARY (AG.)
MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
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SALUTATIONS

- Ms. Angela Lee Loy, Immediate Past President, Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI)
- Mr. Dietrich Guichard- Chief Executive Officer, exporTT
- Ms Vashti Guyadeen, Chief Executive Officer, TTCSI
- Members of the Board of Directors, Management and Staff of the Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI) and ExporTT
- Ms Allyson Francis, Trade Specialist, Caribbean Export Development Agency
- Ms. Lorraine Pouchet, President Trinidad and Tobago Incoming Tour Operators' Association
- Ms. Roxanne Pantin- President, Caribbean Association of Event Management Professionals (CAEMP)
- Distinguished guests
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

It is indeed a pleasure to address you today on behalf of the Minister of Trade and Industry, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, at this Services Go Global Training Programme. The Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI) must be commended for organizing this event and for focussing on activities geared towards building capacity of its membership and raising awareness of global standards that can translate into new market opportunities.

The Minister is particularly pleased with TTCSI's partnership with the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) and exporTT Limited to advance the sector's reach beyond Trinidad and Tobago. This is in keeping with the new Trinidad and Tobago Trade Policy (TTTP) 2019-2023 which has, among its principal objectives, to achieve growth in the production and export of non-energy goods and services as well as growth in the production and export of **high value-added** goods and services.

Trade Policy 2019-2023

The Ministry of Trade and Industry in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), developed this new strategic blueprint with the theme "*Towards Sustainable Growth and Development*". It outlines specific trade-related strategies including to accelerate economic and export diversification by creating a more facilitative environment for business and trade; increasing exports of non-energy goods and services; and expanding Trinidad and Tobago's market share within traditional and non-traditional markets. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to energising the services sector with the overarching policy objective being to build the export capability of the services subsectors.

ECLAC's analysis of Caribbean economies over the period 1985-2017 revealed that 58% of services growth spills over to Real Per Capita GDP growth compared with 13% manufacturing growth being transmitted to the domestic economy.

The analysis further highlighted that Trinidad and Tobago's unrealized potential to achieve high growth lies mainly in the services sector as it accounts for most of the country's capacity to produce and employ domestic capital.

As you are aware, trade in services covers a wide range of activities governed by the implementation of commitments under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and CARICOM-linked agreements. These include:

- business services (including energy services);
- maritime services;
- communication services;
- distribution services;
- financial services; and
- transport, tourism and related travel services

The new TTTP addresses the mode of delivery of these services be it via cross border supply; consumption abroad; commercial presence; or through the presence of natural persons.

Based on the broader policy objectives, measures to support expansion of the services sector are classified into four main areas namely:

1. Market Liberalization, Data, Infrastructure and Financing
2. Institutional, Legislative and Regulatory Framework
3. Enhancing Market Access Opportunities Through Negotiating and Implementing Trade Agreements
4. Connectivity, Certification and Enhancing Production and Export Capacity

Trade in services, from a global perspective, has grown rapidly since the GATS came into effect in 1995 accounting for approximately 8.5% of global GDP in 1995 and rising to an estimated 13.5% of global GDP in 2018. Moreover, global exports of services increased from US\$1.295 trillion to US\$5.367 trillion, representing more than a three (3) fold increase for the same period¹.

Domestically in 2018, the contribution of the Services sector to national GDP was 50.8% at constant prices (59.8% at current prices). Employment figures as at 2017, the most recent statistics available, record employment of approximately 75% of the labour force. This demonstrates the sector's significant socio-economic impact and potential to contribute to the growth and sustainable development of our domestic economy². This is particularly so among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Additionally, the Central Statistical Office reports that services accounted for approximately 10% of the country's exports, but notably for some 60% of total value added³. The potential for the sector to grow, provide more employment opportunities and increased foreign exchange revenues for MSMEs is a reality this Government is resolute on achieving.

PSIP Project – National Services Exporters' Registry

A major constraint to robust strategic intervention is the unavailability of reliable data on services production in general and the overall trade in services. The Ministry of Trade and Industry is therefore fully supportive of the TTCSI's project to develop a National Services Exporters' Registry, the first of its kind, which will address the dearth of trade in services statistics which adversely affects the development of evidence-based policies. We recognise the considerable work done by the CEO and her team in collaboration with the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business.

The Registry, as it commonly called, will be a repository for trade in services data and will provide an on-line platform where such can be stored, processed and disseminated. The tangible benefits to be derived from this mechanism will be access to readily available data that will inform policy-making for the sector, negotiating positions for trade agreements and information on match-making and B2B opportunities for firms. The Registry will focus on energy services, cultural and creative industries, tourism, Information and Communications Technology (ICTs), business and professional services and education services.

¹ Source: Trinidad and Tobago Trade Policy (2019-2023).

² TTCSI 2018 Annual Report

³ Source: Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago, ECLAC on the basis of official figures.

The TTCSI's proactive approach to bolster the sector is also reflected in other developmental projects such as the Services Go Global (SGG) Programme; the Cluster Development Plan for the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) Tourism Sector; Export development training for the Creative/Cultural Industries; and the Industry Standards and Certification Programme.

Within the new Trade Policy, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is unwavering in making better use of existing export and development cooperation opportunities under existing trade agreements and exploring new avenues for expanding services market access in new bilateral or multilateral arrangements. Together with our CARIFORUM partners, we were successful in securing significant market access in services under the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union. We will advance such discussions with partners in Latin and Central America as well as with those in Africa and Asia.

In support of this objective, we will establish a framework for the periodic conduct of market intelligence, market entry requirements, export potential and investment opportunities specifically for the services sector.

Maritime

In addition to the identified sectors in the Registry, the Government has also prioritized the development of the Yachting or Leisure marine sub-sector, within the maritime services area. This is seen as economically viable given Trinidad and Tobago's strategic geographic location below the hurricane belt and renowned capacity for the provision of world class yacht repair and maintenance services.

Creative Industries

The Ministry also has the remit to develop the Creative Industry and through its agency CreativeTT, strategic plans in the areas of film, fashion and music have been produced.

The strategy of these respective plans is based on enlarging our pool of creative talent, promoting Research and Development (R&D) within the Industries and facilitating the entry of our creative enterprises into the global market. The implementation of these plans include several frontline projects such as:

Fashion Value Chain Investment Programme (FVCIP)

This Programme enables local Designers to be better positioned to execute their respective business plans, increase their exports and better equipped to compete on the international market. Notably, some of these Designers have begun exporting to new markets such as St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, and Barbados in the region; and extra-regionally to South Korea, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and the Philippines.

The Bespoke Tailoring Programme

This programme is integral to building export capacity, successfully positioning local customized tailor-made products in international markets, creating sustainable employment and generating increased foreign exchange.

Artiste Portfolio Development Programme ('Spotlight')

- The Artiste Portfolio Development Programme, now renamed Spotlight, was conceptualized with the intention of refining a portfolio of ten (10) musical artists annually whose talent can be exported globally. This one-year programme selects artistes who are on the verge of becoming export ready and grooms them to leverage their creative talent on the worldwide market. Thus far we have seen:
- The first cohort of ten (10) artistes completing this Programme in January 2019, with two (2) having already penetrated the international market.
- One (1) artiste has toured Japan, Bali, Singapore, Australia, Canada and Portugal
- One has been contracted to perform in Disney's *The Lion King*.

Other Strategic Policy Interventions

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry, has developed a number of strategic policy tools such as the National Quality Policy, the National E-Commerce Policy and Policy to Enhance the Secured Transactions Regime which are all geared towards creating an environment for businesses to grow, innovate and compete successfully among the best at the global level.

I invite you to explore the website of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and peruse the new Trinidad and Tobago Trade Policy and other strategic frameworks which are being implemented.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the TTCSI for facilitating this timely workshop. It demonstrates the private sector's commitment to playing an important role in the country's diversification process. The partnership with exporTT and Caribbean Export can only bear fruit and we wish to encourage the kind of collaboration that seeks to achieve sustainable development at all levels.

I would also like to commend the organization on its initiative to name the Services Go Global award in honour of the late Lawrence “Larry” Placide, a stalwart and visionary in the development of the services sector. His expertise, collaboration and resourcefulness were greatly appreciated by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the seeds he planted are bearing fruit.

To our participants here today, I encourage you all to take advantage of this opportunity and apply the knowledge gained over the three days to your work. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Workshop Facilitator, Ms. Michelle Hustler for sharing her perspectives and experience on the MICE cluster. We look forward to many success stories emanating from this experience.

Last but not least, the Ministry of Trade and Industry would like commend the President, Board, CEO and staff of the TTCSI for their tireless work in developing the local services sector.

I thank you.