



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

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***Launch of the Second Edition
of the National Cocoa Awards
“Celebrating the Value of Our
Trinitario Cocoa Culture and
Diverse Flavours”***

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REMARKS

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

25TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

SALUTATIONS

- Senator the Honourable Clarence Rambharat, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries
- Mrs Jacqueline Rawlins, Chairman of the Cocoa Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited,
- Professor Pathmanathan Umaharan, Director, Cocoa Research Centre
- Mr. Marc Jardine, Director, exporTT Limited
- Mr. Leon Granger, CEO of the Cocoa Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited and Chairman National Organizing Committee
- Member organisations of the National Organising Committee,
- Cocoa stakeholders
- Ladies and gentlemen

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, GOOD MORNING

I am pleased to deliver remarks at the Launch of the Second Edition of the National Cocoa Awards for Trinidad and Tobago, which is the precursor to Trinidad and Tobago's involvement in the International Cocoa Awards (ICA), Cocoa Excellence Programme, 2021 Edition. The theme of this year's national awards - "*Celebrating the value of our Trinitario cocoa culture and diverse flavours*" is truly appropriate as Trinidad and Tobago has managed to secure eight (8) wins at the International Cocoa Awards over the period 2010 to 2019 - the most wins as compared to any other participating country. This indeed attests to the fact that our Trinitario cocoa remains one of the world's premier grade cocoa beans and is highly regarded for its superior flavour profile.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry, through exporTT, is elated to be a part of the National Cocoa Awards and fully supports the mission of the National Cocoa Awards Committee which is geared towards empowering and recognizing cocoa farmers and producers, to improve quality and production according to best practices, contributing to a globally recognized Trinidad and Tobago cocoa brand.

Our cocoa beans, raw and roasted, are of premium value and have been gaining significant revenue and foreign exchange for Trinidad and Tobago. In 2018 and 2019, cocoa beans earned TT\$9.7 Million and TT\$8.2 Million respectively, while for the period January to August 2020 export of Cocoa Beans has earned TT\$ 4.6 Million. Notably, the major export markets were Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Japan and the United States of America, which accounted for over 95% of our exported locally produced cocoa. Further analysis shows that the top three exporters, exporting above TT\$500,000 annually in the Agro-processing sector are Cocoa Farmers.

This is truly gratifying, as it demonstrates that an international palate exists for our unique, fine flavor Cocoa. When we look further up the value chain, the statistics are even more promising as it reveals that the exports of chocolate and other cocoa preparations increased by 99% from 2010 to 2019. The major increase was experienced in 2019, with one manufacturer, exporting to Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, Ireland and St. Lucia.

Trinidad and Tobago's cocoa and chocolate industry has already embraced the opportunity of using the Trinitario reputation, as over 40 established crafters, some already boasting of obtaining international awards for their artisanal chocolate are dominating international markets. Some examples include, the Tobago Estate Chocolate which won a silver award at the International Chocolate Awards in 2019 for its Dark Milk Chocolate; Trinidad and Tobago Fine Cocoa Company which was featured as part of Harrod's special collection of international chocolates in 2017 and is the recipient of five Academy of Chocolate Awards. More recently, I

had the opportunity to deliver remarks at the launch of Angostura's Cocoa Bitters, this new product also diversifies the current portfolio of beverages manufactured by the Company and plays a pivotal role in promoting and developing the Cocoa industry in Trinidad and Tobago as the infusion of the Trinitario cocoa has resulted in an exhilarating blend.

Cocoa is of considerable economic importance as it generates export revenues, creates sustainable employment and facilitates the growth of new industry and according to a study undertaken by UNCTAD in 2016 entitled "Cocoa Industry: Integrating Small Farmers into the Global Value Chain" The value added along each step is greatest at the stages of manufacturing (35.2%) and retailing (42.2%).

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has recognized the growth potential of the cocoa industry to assist in diversifying the economy and is committed to supporting its expansion. Accordingly in our Trade Policy (2019-2023) Agriculture and Agro-processing industries, specifically Cocoa, have been identified as having significant untapped potential for Diversification. To aid in Government's continued efforts to support and promote agribusiness and entrepreneurial development within the Cocoa industry, a TT\$90 million Agro-Processing and Light Industrial Park was officially opened in Moruga on July 14th, 2020. This Park is strategically located in southern Trinidad where Cocoa Processing and Chocolate Production have been identified as specifically targeted industries to be established at the Park, with pre-designed facilities constructed.

I also wish to take the opportunity to briefly highlight some of the other key initiatives that the Ministry of Trade and Industry has implemented aimed at growing the sector.

Firstly, in order to build the competitiveness of our Cocoa in the international market, the Ministry of Trade and Industry presented two new cocoa standards to The University of the West Indies (UWI) which were developed by the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards in collaboration with key stakeholders. The standards, which were initiated by the Cocoa Research Centre, will positively impact the quality parameters of locally produced cocoa, enhance its competitiveness and improve access to international markets.

Secondly, provision has been made to assist exporters with meeting export standards through a co-financing support facility at exporTT. This facility has rendered assistance to chocolatiers in several capacity building areas including:

- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) certification;
- upgrading of cocoa production facilities;
- acquisition of Geographic Indication (GI) to protect intellectual property;

- organic certification for plantations;
- feasibility research into new products and distribution channels and good manufacturing practice food safety compliance and implementation.

Another complementary resource is the Grant Fund Facility (GFF), which was launched by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and extended in August 2019. This initiative affords wholly-owned local companies, in light and high-value manufacturing and agro-processing, an invaluable opportunity to invest in cutting edge technology, machinery and equipment to expand output, increase exports and grow competitiveness. Of the 13 companies that received grants under the GFF, one company received funding for the acquisition of machinery and equipment, to manufacture the Trinitario cocoa bean into a range of cocoa and chocolate products,

Also a revised Research and Development Fund (RDF) was launched in November 2017, provides tiered funding for innovative, technology driven business ideas up to a maximum of \$1 million per beneficiary of which one successful cocoa-processing applicant was approved.

The Government is particularly inspired by the resilience demonstrated by the Cocoa and Chocolate sector as they remained steadfast and resolute in maintaining production and exports during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The further development of the Cocoa Sector can contribute significantly to improving our economy, and in this regard, the Ministry of Trade and Industry will continue to provide support and work with the key stakeholders to establish a resilient and sustainable cocoa sector which will redound to increasing the contribution of non-energy exports to national development.

In closing, I must commend the National Organising Committee for the National Cocoa Awards and all contributing stakeholders. Throughout its development history, Trinidad and Tobago's cocoa has maintained a mark of excellence and its legacy remains intact, I encourage all Cocoa Farmers to participate in the National Cocoa Awards as the opportunities afforded through increased international recognition and reputation are tremendous and can positively impact you and be the cornerstone for development of the embryonic cocoa value-added sector.