



# Media Release

## TRADE MINISTER CHALLENGES WOMEN TO MONETIZE THEIR SKILLS

**8 October, 2020:** Trade and Industry Minister, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon has called on women to “develop a posture of confidence and pursue opportunities to monetize what they do best to secure their presence in the international trading place”. During her contribution at the International Trade Centre’s (ITC) Virtual Good Trade Summit panel discussion entitled “**Women and trade at the heart of the pandemic recovery**” on Wednesday 7 October, 2020 Minister Gopee-Scoon highlighted several measures that should be undertaken by Governments to empower women in trade.

Minister Gopee-Scoon noted that countries, especially small developing states must invest in creating an enabling digital environment which will provide the foundation for the creation of a fully digital economy. Citing Trinidad and Tobago’s Single Electronic Window platform, as an example, Minister Gopee-Scoon said, “**the Government is pursuing the implementation of Electronic Funds Transfer which allow all payments to Government, such as taxes and custom duties to be made electronically. We are also pursuing the Automation of all government services where practicable and enhancing cooperation between stakeholders to modernize, upgrade and automate import procedures to reduce the time and cost associated with import and export of goods**”. She underscored the importance of Government financial support and incentives to ensure the survival of existing businesses as well as to encourage the proliferation of new business ventures and the development of the manufacturing sector.

Minister Gopee-Scoon indicated that as Trinidad and Tobago responds to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, priority will continue to be placed on creating the facilitative environment for e-commerce to grow and thrive.

She said ***“Covid-19 acted as an impetus to get e-commerce moving with entrepreneurs finding innovative ways to conduct their business online. There has been an uptick in e-commerce activity particularly as it relates to the local private sector. More online services are now offered and those with an online presence have intensified their marketing and advertising”***. She assured attendees that as Trinidad and Tobago moves forward post Covid-19, the Government will ensure, as far as is possible, that businesses have the necessary tools and resources to adjust their business models to ensure that they derive tangible benefits from e-commerce, and to put businesses in a position to emerge from this pandemic stronger.

Minister Gopee-Scoon urged female entrepreneurs to join the SheTrades platform, a one stop shop for women-owned businesses to connect to a diverse range of organisations internationally. She announced that the Ministry of Trade and Industry in collaboration with exporTT will launch the National SheTrades Hub which is an initiative of the International Trade Center on 28 October 2020. The aim of this project is to connect over 3 million women internationally by 2021 with access to a comprehensive suite of programmes which aims to increase their international competitiveness and connect them to new markets.

Other international panelist spoke on initiatives for boosting support to female entrepreneurs, women as drivers of economic recovery and resilience during COVID-19 and beyond and the role of SMEs to foster inclusive trade policies beyond the COVID-19 crisis. Under the theme *“Emerging Stronger from the COVID-19 Crisis”*, the 2-day Good Trade Summit (October 7-8, 2020) is a premier global event hosted by the International Trade Center that links women entrepreneurs with buyers and partners. The event provides a unique platform for critical discussions on trade, sustainability, inclusivity and gender, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders from the trade and development community, business leaders, and high-level officials.

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