



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

*Product Launch of the Moruga Hill Rice
Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society Ltd.*

“Red Gold”

ADDRESS

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

FEBRUARY 5TH, 2021

SALUTATIONS

- Senator, the Honourable Clarence Rambharat, Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries
- Member of Parliament for Moruga /Table Land, Ms. Michelle Benjamin
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps – Excellencies and Ambassadors
- Ms. Rachael Ann Cooper-Lee, President, Moruga Hill Rice Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society Ltd
- Chairmen, CEOs and Representatives of State Corporations and Boards
- Heads and Representatives of International Organizations
- Members of the Moruga Hill Rice Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society Ltd
- Representatives of Community Based Organizations
- Specially invited guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning all.

It is my pleasure to join you at the official launch of Red Gold, Moruga Hill Rice, produced by you – the Moruga Hill Rice Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society Ltd. I am heartened to see that the combined efforts of the membership have resulted in the development of this new brand.

I want to take this opportunity to commend you, as in your three years of existence you have already done some of the ground work required to aid your success. I am advised that the Society has already registered its *Red Gold* trademark with the Intellectual Property Office which will add significant value to your product.

This highlights your resolve as farmers to take the necessary risks to propel your community and by extension our economy, particularly at a time such as this. I hope that many others, like you, capitalise on the opportunity that many of our unique indigenous products can have both locally and internationally.

This launch takes place at an opportune time as the Government seeks to reenergize and improve the agricultural sector to ensure greater food security as well as the promotion and consumption of local produce. We are aware that this cannot happen overnight, as such the Government has been working on several initiatives aimed at supporting the farming community in its thrust to contribute meaningfully to economic activity. We look forward to seeing your brand marketed throughout Trinidad and Tobago, the diaspora and internationally.

I am pleased that the Society has already benefitted from the assistance and guidance of several institutions such as NAMDEVCO, IICA and CARIRI as it continues to work towards ensuring that this

product is a success. I must therefore commend you for pursuing your business plan despite the many challenges encountered.

As you are aware, this Moruga Agro-Processing Facility, the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago, aims to provide local businesses and start-ups involved in light manufacturing and agro-processing with leasable space at competitive rates. What is unique about this Facility is its focus on agro-processing. Tenants have the opportunity to process agricultural commodities and in turn create various products that add value to the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. It is therefore an ideal location for farmers and manufacturers alike to establish linkages among themselves, become more innovative and explore the capabilities of our unique agricultural resources.

In this regard, while we commemorate the launch of Red Gold today, it is my hope that within the next year or so we will be back here celebrating the Society's own processing facility.

In moving forward, I urge you to utilize the networks available to you to build strategic partnerships for the growth of this business. There is strength in numbers and with your diverse membership I foresee many successes for this product. The Government stands ready to assist in any way we can and I encourage you to utilize the services available through several Government Agencies.

I also urge you to remain resilient in your quest to become a multifaceted and successful cooperative. This will require continuous dialogue among yourselves to ensure a unified approach in all your endeavors. Be innovative and adopt relevant technologies in order to enhance productivity.

The Moruga Hill Rice Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society Limited has already made significant strides and I am certain that once this dynamism is maintained every success will be achieved so that in a few short years the world will recognize Trinidad and Tobago for its Red Gold.

Thank you.