



# Media Release

## YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS EMPOWERED TO ADOPT GOOD MANUFACTURING PRACTICES

**16 June, 2021:-** Youth entrepreneurs in Trinidad and Tobago play an integral role in driving the sustainable growth and development of our economy. On Wednesday 9 June, 2021, over sixty (60) youth entrepreneurs participated in a webinar themed “**Empowering Youth Entrepreneurs in the Food Industry to adopt Good Manufacturing Practices,**” hosted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in collaboration with exporTT Limited, the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), the Ministry of Health and Youth Business Trinidad and Tobago (YBTT).

The webinar sought to increase participant’s awareness of the Good Manufacturing Practices for the Food Industry (GMP) Standard developed by the TTBS. Meeting these quality benchmarks is essential for our entrepreneurs in the food industry to gain access to international markets which can result in the expansion of the country’s business and trade opportunities, while enhancing the productivity and innovation of local entrepreneurs. According to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), approximately 1 in every 49 persons in the Caribbean fall ill every year as a result of foodborne diseases; with a direct economic cost of US\$21 million per year. This highlights the importance of ensuring that manufacturers of food products meet the basic food safety requirements to guarantee that foods produced are safe for human consumption.

Mr. Michael James, Director Industry at the Ministry of Trade and Industry in welcoming participants emphasized the meaningful contribution youth entrepreneurs can have in navigating the challenges presented by the COVID-19. He added that the Ministry and its agencies are key players in the entrepreneurship ecosystem and is committed to providing the support needed to grow businesses and assist them in becoming competitive both locally and internationally.

The standard outlines the essential practices necessary to enable food establishments to consistently produce safe food. Mr. Neil Rampersad, Chief Public Health Inspector at the Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health highlighted some of the specific regulatory requirements:

- Establishments should not be located in environmentally polluted areas that are subjected to flooding, prone to pest infestation or areas where solid and liquid wastes cannot be removed
- The layout of the area should permit adequate maintenance and cleaning; and should be protected from cross contamination
- The facility must have an adequate supply of hot and cold potable water; and adequate cleaning facilities for raw foods, utensils and equipment
- The facility should include suitable and adequate hygiene facilities and toilets (including changing facilities)
- There should be a separate storage facility for the safe and hygienic storage of food products, ingredients and packaging materials
- All equipment and containers should be of a material that is non-toxic and that can be easily cleaned e.g. stainless steel
- Work surfaces should be impervious, smooth, easy to clean and maintain

As the national regulatory authority responsible for the safety and efficacy of Food, Drugs Cosmetics and Devices in Trinidad & Tobago, Mr. Farz Khan, Director Chemistry Food and Drugs Division (CFDD) of Ministry of Health presented on the role of CFFD. He said, ***“All food products manufactured in Trinidad and Tobago should be submitted to the Chemistry, Food and Drugs Division for evaluation and assessment, to ensure that they are not in contravention with the Trinidad and Tobago Food and Drug Act or Regulations.”*** He also informed participants that food safety is the responsibility of the manufacturer and urged them to be responsible and adhere to the regulatory requirements.

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