



# Media Release

## ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CEMENT INDUSTRY TO PROTECT CONSUMERS

**December 13, 2021:-** The Ministry of Trade and Industry has noted the announcement made by the local cement manufacturer of an impending increase in the price of cement by 15% with effect from 20th December 2021 and wishes to inform the public of two decisions taken by the Government to ensure the affordability of cement in the local market.

The Government was made aware of a potential price increase of cement in November 2021. At that time, the MTI indicated its concern to the TCL Group and expressed the view that any price increase was unacceptable given that 90% of the inputs into the manufacture of cement is local.

Proactively, on 18th November 2021, the Cabinet agreed to a Revision of the Quota and Import Licensing Regime for Cement (Building Cement-Grey and Other Hydraulic Cements) for 2022. Specifically, the maximum Quota ceiling for Cement allowed for importation will be set at 150,000 tonnes (an increase from 75,000 tonnes in 2021 with each existing registered importer receiving a 50% increase in their quota allocation) in 2022.

Secondly, at a Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) of CARICOM held on 10 December 2021 and at the request of Trinidad and Tobago, COTED agreed to a suspension of the CET and the increase of the rate of duty to 20% on Other hydraulic cements of HS 2523.90.00 for the one (1) year period, January 1 to December 31, 2022. It will be recalled that COTED had previously approved a suspension of the CET and the increase of the rate of duty to 50% on Other hydraulic cements of HS 2523.90.00 for the one (1) year period, January 1 to December 31, 2021. Therefore, for the period 01 January 2022 to December 31, 2022 the rate of duty on Other hydraulic cements will now be 20% from the previous 50%.

These public policy adjustments will allow for additional volumes of extra-regional cement to enter Trinidad and Tobago at a lower rate of duty so as to ensure that cement remains competitively priced. These measures will also ensure the continued viability of the local cement manufacturing industry (which is a net foreign exchange earner and currently provides employment to over 315 persons directly and engages approximately 450 small contractors for services).

The Government is of the firm view that the availability of affordable cement forms a critical linkage between the manufacturing and construction sectors and therefore is vital for the country's sustainable development as well as the welfare of consumers.

The MTI wishes to assure the public that it shall continue to actively monitor market conditions in the domestic market and make further adjustments as required to ensure affordable cement for consumers.

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