



# Media Release

## TRADE MINISTER MEETS WITH THA CHIEF SECRETARY

**February 24, 2022:-** On Friday 18 February, 2022, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry met with the Honourable Farley Augustine, Chief Secretary, Tobago House of Assembly (THA), Councillor Tashia Grace Burris, Secretary of Tourism, Culture, Antiquities and Transportation and senior THA officials to discuss trade and investment matters pertinent to Tobago. The Chief Secretary expressed keen interest in strengthening the working relationship between the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and the THA, Division of Finance, Trade and the Economy.

The Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of developing the services sector in Tobago. He noted that Tobago's competitive advantage lies in tourism and its related services and if fully explored could assist with Trinidad and Tobago's diversification efforts, foreign exchange earnings and reduction in the balance of trade. He therefore welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with the Ministry of Trade and Industry on several ongoing initiatives to advance the services sector.

One such initiative highlighted by Minister Gopee-Scoon is the ongoing effort by the MTI to assist the THA with the establishment of a Unit dedicated to Trade in Services. The Unit would strengthen the capacity of the THA to develop a services trade policy and strategies for Tobago.

In discussing opportunities for Tobago's goods exports, Chief Secretary Augustine underscored his desire to develop Tobago's manufacturing and export capacity and welcomed information on the support programmes currently available under the MTI to assist Tobago firms. Minister Gopee-Scoon referenced several programmes including export capacity building available to assist in developing tailored export plans and client management systems, as well as training in business accounting; costing and pricing; and marketing.

Minister Gopee-Scoon further added that under the national Export Booster Initiative, which is a strategic and targeted programme to promote the export of manufactured goods, targeted support is available to Tobago based firms. Under this Initiative, specific focus is placed on building the capacity of indigenous confectioners in Tobago with the provision of technical support to improve the product and packaging of Tobago's indigenous and specialty sweets which would ensure standardization and readiness for the international market.

Minister Gopee-Scoon and Chief Secretary Augustine committed to greater collaboration in the interest of developing the services sector and advancing trade and investment in Tobago.

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