



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Trade and Industry

Launch of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards Tobago Office

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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

MARCH 6TH, 2024

Salutations

- The Honourable Faith B. Yisrael – Deputy Chief Secretary, Tobago House of Assembly (THA)
- Mr. Earland Kent - Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, Central Administrative Services
- Mr. Lawford Dupres - Chairman and other Members of the Board of Directors of TTBS
- Mrs. Ava Mahabir-Dass – Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Mr Curtis Williams – Chairman, Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce – Tobago Division
- Mr. José E. Trejo, Executive Director of TTBS
- Mrs Pamela Scotland-Benjamin - Deputy General Manager Operations, Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (AATT)
- Members of the Media
- Specially invited guests
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

It is a pleasure for me to be here today on the occasion of the launch of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards' (TTBS) new office in Tobago. I recall my last visit in November when I met with members of the Tobago Chamber and committed to improving access to Government services as it relates to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. It is not that services were not afforded before, but now, through TTBS we are bringing services to your door.

The establishment of this office is indicative of Government's commitment to deliver services to all of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Today represents a progressive move by the Bureau that will positively impact various stakeholders including consumers and businesses. Specifically, the office will serve as the nucleus for TTBS' operations in Tobago, contributing to greater awareness of standards, providing metrology and accreditation services and more than ever deepening consumer confidence.

The establishment of this office is a demonstration of the Bureau's commitment to the realization of our trade policy objectives, fostering an environment that is conducive to business growth and ensuring international competitiveness of goods and services. It will also serve as a critical pillar in supporting the development of the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) in Tobago.

The benefits of this office are significant and will positively impact Tobago's regulatory landscape for goods and services. Having a permanent TTBS presence in Tobago will facilitate the timely inspection of goods where required, undertake the necessary verification of measuring devices and provide certification services without interruption. It will also ensure that the reporting of such

activities are incorporated into the overall national database, thereby providing more reliable and timely data to aid in decision making and policy formulation.

Specifically, the establishment of this office will critically support the ongoing work of the Bureau in Tobago in key operational areas such as (1) Implementation, (2) Metrology and (3) Certification.

1. Implementation Activities

TTBS' Implementation Division, responsible for implementing compulsory standards, assists businesses in understanding and complying with regulatory requirements, facilitating market access and trade. I am encouraged by the service delivery of this Division over the last year, despite having officers travel to the island twice per week:

Inspections were conducted on used vehicles, forty-seven (47) textile products and footwear items and (4) four safety products and pre-packaged goods;

Market Surveillance activities were conducted at the premises of nineteen (19) businesses (Importers / Retailers / Wholesalers / Distributors);

A total of nine (9) stakeholder engagements were held with Officials of the Customs and Excise Division (CED); and Three (3) Surveys were undertaken at the premises of businesses (Importers / Retailers / Wholesalers / Distributors)

While the work of the Bureau was effective, this arrangement is neither convenient nor sustainable. A more predictable and reliable system had to be implemented. The establishment of this office will provide a permanent home for the Implementation Division's activities and seek to improve the level of service delivery and stakeholder engagement on the island.

2. Metrology Activities

In relation to Metrology, the work of the Legal Metrology Inspectorate (LMI) is quite important in ensuring that measuring devices used in business adhere to the established standards and are properly calibrated. Precision in measurement is critical in sectors such as medicine and pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, mining and agriculture, where very small deviations from standards can have significant consequences and severe cost implications. The TTBS, through its robust inspections, guarantees that our products meet not only national but also international standards. These actions bring integrity to our local goods and services and play a crucial role in ensuring consumer confidence.

Currently, this unit conducts verifications of measuring devices used in commercial activities such as Fuel and CNG dispensers, scales used at municipal markets, supermarkets and couriers. The goal of the Government is to ensure that all measuring devices are verified.

I am particularly encouraged by the results that have been generated in Tobago, thus far, with respect to the verification of measuring devices used on the island. There has been an impressive 100% compliance for the verification of fuel dispensers at various service stations, and scales used at the airport and at the Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation.

However, there is an urgent requirement for verifications to be extended to other areas of commercial activity, including the municipal markets, supermarkets, minimarts and hardwares, as

these activities have not commenced in Tobago. It is in areas such as these that the establishment of this office will be especially important.

The intention of the Bureau is to collaborate with various businesses in Tobago to move towards full compliance which will ultimately benefit consumers.

3. Certification Activities

Additionally, with a permanent presence in Tobago, TTBS will strengthen the services offered by its Certification Division including programmes such as the Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Industry Certification (TTTIC), the Product Certification and the Management System Certification. Through the work of this Division the Bureau will verify that locally produced goods and services meet specific standards through conformity assessment.

The way forward

The establishment of this office is quite timely and could not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders including the Government, the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and the Bureau. This partnership underscores a unified effort towards achieving national goals.

Once again, I wish to recognize the TTBS for its commitment to ensuring that its services are readily available and accessible to all. The initiatives undertaken by the Bureau are integral to supporting the public and private sectors and is in alignment with national goals, thereby contributing to the continued development of our nation. The Bureau is here to provide the necessary advice and guidance and I urge you to utilize their expert services to grow and reposition your businesses.

I thank you.