



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

MEDIA RELEASE

Government Approves Continued Suspension of the Common External Tariff on Key Goods – Maintaining affordability

January 8, 2025:- The Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism (MTTI) wishes to advise the public that Cabinet has approved the continued suspension and variation of the Common External Tariff (CET) on a range of basic food items, public health supplies and additional products for a further two-year period, from **1 January 2026 to 31 December 2027**. Cabinet also approved the continuation of an increased rate of duty on **imported pasta** to support local manufacturing.

The measure is aimed at maintaining affordable prices for consumers, particularly vulnerable households, while supporting domestic manufacturers by reducing the cost of imported raw materials and essential inputs. In addition, the CET suspensions underscores the Government's commitment to food security and affordability, improvements to public health and driving economic diversification.

The CET will remain suspended, allowing a 0% rate of duty, on a **List of Basic Food Items**, including infant formula and various canned fish and meat products. These items previously attracted duties of up to 20%. The suspensions, which have been in effect since 2009, continues to mitigate the impact of rising food prices and prevent cost increases for consumers.

Cabinet also approved the continuation of the suspension and variation of the CET on a **List of Additional Products**, including refined sugar, edible oils, frozen French fries, powdered milk, sulphonic acid, personal protective equipment (PPE), and wires and angles of non-alloy steel. These measures support the competitiveness of locally manufactured products, promote the use of safety products, reduce the cost of construction materials and support the creative industry.

The CET will also remain suspended on a **List of Public Health Supplies**, allowing a 0% rate of duty on items used in the prevention and control of mosquito-borne diseases such as Malaria, Dengue, Yellow Fever, Chikungunya and Zika, as well as in critical medical procedures. This action is in place to safeguard the public's health and is fully supported by the Ministry of Health.

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In addition, Cabinet approved the continuation of the 60% rate of duty on **pasta**, first introduced in 2020 to support the local manufacturing industry. Since its implementation, imports have declined by 49%, while domestic production and exports have increased by 42%, with no evidence of price gouging. This measure results in foreign exchange savings.

The MTTI undertook the necessary analysis and consultations with key stakeholders, including the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA) and the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce (TTCIC), both of which supported the renewals. Where required, approval will be sought from the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in accordance with CARICOM rules.

For a full list of the items covered under this suspension and variation of the CET, please go to <https://laws.gov.tt/ttdll-web/revision/bylegalnotice>.

The Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism remains committed to policies that protect consumers, strengthen local industry, promote sustainable economic growth and increase foreign exchange savings.

The Trade Directorate of the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism can be contacted for further information on the CET suspensions at 623-2931 ext. 2415

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