

Fit 4 Europe Project Close-off
“Increasing Trade with the European Union”
Hilton Hotel
November 23, 2016

CLOSING REMARKS – AG CEO, EXPORTT

Protocol listing

Senator, the Honourable, Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry

Dr Ulrich Thiessen, International Cooperation Programme Manager, Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago

Mr Clive Vokes, Project Consultant and Director, Market Scoping International

Members of the Board of Directors, exporTT Ltd

Members of the Fit 4 Europe Project – Steering Committee

Management and Staff exporTT Ltd

Members of the Media

Other Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

On behalf of exporTT, it is indeed my pleasure to make a few closing remarks and express gratitude to all those who made this event a reality.

Based on the presentations, we see the big task ahead to engage the European Union market. At exporTT, we are committed to continuing our support for Fit 4 Europe beneficiary companies.

We will execute a post-project mentorship programme set to commence in January, 2017 and consist of, firstly a site visit to S M Jaleel, the leading non-alcoholic beverage manufacturer in the Caribbean. During that visit you will have an opportunity to tour the plant and hear first-hand the success story of how Jaleel pioneered a long list of international 'firsts' for innovations in product and packaging development in its thrust to expand into five continents.

Next, exporTT will host two mentorship sessions, one in January and the other in May, 2017 where the Tier 1 companies will have the opportunity to transfer the lessons learnt during the Market Penetration Missions and follow-ups to the Tier 2 and 3 firms. The Tier 2s and 3s will also be invited to share their experiences over the life of the project and next steps towards expanding trade with the EU. We will also host a session to provide you with the tools to develop a successful e-commerce platform.

Further, exporTT will undertake to develop a one (1) year action plan to support each firm commencing January, 2017. This will include activities to be completed by both exporTT and the company. exporTT's aim is to ensure sustainable development of each of you in your continued market penetration plans to enter the EU beyond the life of the project. We welcome feedback from you during your one-on-one meetings

this week with our Project Consultant and exporTT Staff as to areas where further support is required.

At the end of the journey, each company will be issued with a Fit 4 Europe Certificate along with a letter of endorsement that outlines the tailored programmes and activities you have completed under the project.

We are pleased that overall, this project was a success. It is essential that we keep feeding the pipeline of prospective exporters whilst adapting the model to take into other markets. Germany and Scandinavia are EU territories which may be tested in the future. Going forward, with international projects such as these, we will ensure that the companies are appropriately screened and selected for the target markets. We intend to engage more Tier 2 regional exporters with the capability of internationalising their operation.

In closing, I will now like to take the time to extend exporTT's gratitude for today's proceedings.

Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry - For your continued support from the inception of the project and for your commitment to expanding trade under the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement.

Dr Ulrich Thiessen, International Cooperation Programme Manager, Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad & Tobago - For your invaluable contribution in our efforts to navigate the diverse markets of the European Union. We are grateful for the long-standing relationship and development assistance afforded economies such as ours in our diversification thrust.

To our Chairman of exporTT Ltd, Mr Ashmeer Mohamed – A veteran exporter in his own right. Thank you for accepting the honour to deliver this morning's welcome remarks.

Ms Darran Newman, Division Chief Ag, Technical Cooperation Division of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) – for the Statement in her absence (*delivered by Ms Patricia Govia of exporTT*) and for the unwavering support of the CDB and vote of confidence in exporTT's coordination of the Fit 4 Europe project. We are truly grateful.

Mr Clive Vokes, Director, Market Scoping International (and Project Consultant) – For your astuteness in leading the Fit 4 Europe charge and for your contribution to the development of both our companies and staff at exporTT.

The Fit 4 Europe Project Steering Committee (comprising representatives from the Ministry of Trade & Industry; Trinidad & Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA); Trinidad & Tobago Chamber of Industry & Commerce; and the Trinidad & Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI)) – For your invaluable contribution at the inception of the project to screen and select the Project Consultant. Alone we can do so little, together as the Export Support Network (ESN) we can accomplish much.

Mr Tedwin Herbert – former Ag High Commissioner of the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission in London – for the excellent hospitality extended to the two Mission teams and for your commitment to export diversification of the economy. exporTT hopes to continue the legacy of good relations between both our offices.

To our valued presenters from our *Beneficiary Companies* for sharing of your successes and our *Companies which participated in this Fit 4 Europe Journey* we are certain will actively take into account the lessons learnt for future projects.

The exporTT Presenters who have all led delegations to the EU under the project and the wider *Fit 4 Europe Project Team and staff of exporTT* – who worked tirelessly during the last year to ensure a successful project.

To our Chairperson Ms. Camille James, Senior Export Officer, exporTT Ltd - for taking us through this morning's proceedings.

To the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre - for allowing us to use their facilities.

To Soundroom Productions - for their full AV support.

To the media - for taking the time from your busy schedule to cover this event. We look forward to coverage in the news tonight and/or in the newspapers tomorrow.

Other distinguished Guests, thank you all as well for taking the time to attend this Seminar today. To all, I hope that the information provided here is helpful to your efforts in the EU market.

I thank you.