

DESCRIPTION AND GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry & Commerce, in conjunction with the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), and assisted by the Cámara de Industria de Guatemala, is hosting a one day conference entitled “Connecting the Caribbean and Central America: Exploring and Seizing New Opportunities”. The Conference is supported by the Ministries of Trade and Industry and Foreign Affairs. The event will consist of an opening cocktail reception on Tuesday 19th October, 2010 and an all day session on 20th October, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Trinidad.

The key objective of the Conference is to bring together selected entrepreneurs from the Caribbean and Central America, who will identify possible inter-regional business and trade opportunities in chosen sectors. It is our intention to attract at least twenty (20) leading companies from Central America viz Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic and connect them with a similar number of CARICOM companies.

From our research, we have identified sectors (see attachment) with significant potential for inter-regional trade.

TARGETED SECTORS / INDUSTRIES

Freight (note 1)
Food Production and Processing
Manufacturing (note 2)
Information Communication and Technology (note 3)
Medical Tourism
Construction (note 4)
Wholesale/ Distribution(note 5)

Note 1-Includes air and sea freight

Note 2- Limited to light, apparel, pharmaceutical and beverage manufacturing

Note 3- Includes call centre and back office processing

Note 4- Includes all related services such as transport, paving and professional services relating to the construction sector and ship- building.

Note 5- Includes food and beverage, pharmaceutical and office products.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Specific Objectives of the Conference are as follows:

1. To provide the business community of both regions with insights into the economic and competitive landscape of the regions.
2. To share with the conference attendees exemplary business successes and connect the leading entrepreneurs of both regions.
3. To expose progressive companies wishing to expand their operations, to international and market diversification practices in the region.
4. To identify challenges in developing regional trade in the Caribbean and Central American countries and seek Governmental assistance in removing any such obstacles. Both the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago are actively supporting this initiative and representatives will be attending the conference.

APPROACH

The conference has an opening cocktail reception on the first evening, followed by an intense 1-day conference. The key industries and sectors with common interest from both regions will be identified for specific attention and to facilitate matchmaking.

Only specially selected companies in CARICOM and Central America (Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Honduras and Guatemala) have been invited to this conference. No more than 60 companies will be represented by their top executives. This is to facilitate direct interaction, identification of business opportunities and decision-making by leaders. Match making opportunities will be identified and facilitated even before the start of the conference and continued during the conference.

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EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- ✓ A Return Mission to Central America in June 2011 – The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber hopes to lead a mission of businessmen to the Guatemalan Induexpo.
- ✓ Strengthening of business relationships between Central American and Caribbean businesses resulting in increased trade and joint ventures.