



PRESIDENT of the TT Chamber of Industry and Commerce (TTCIC) Angella Persad, right, chats with Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States Luis Andrade Falla while the CEO of TTCIC Catherine Kumar looks on at an opening cocktail reception of the Connecting the Caribbean to Central America Exploring and Seizing New Opportunities forum at the Diplomatic Centre, Prime Minister's residence, La Fantasie Road, St Ann's.



TRADE and Industry Minister, Stephen Cadiz chats with fashion designer, Meiling Essau.

PM: We see stronger Spanish ties

A UNIQUE partnership on various levels between Central America and the Caribbean can only serve to make all of the developing countries more globally competitive.

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar expressed this last Tuesday at an opening cocktail reception of the Connecting the Caribbean to Central America Exploring and Seizing New Opportunities forum at the Diplomatic Centre, Prime Minister's residence, La Fantasie Road, St Anns.

She said the region's commitment to engage in trade with Central America is an "unquestionable display" of its capacity to compete on an international level.

"It is the task of all our governments to ensure that the creative capacity of the peoples of this region is harnessed and our citizens empowered to function on the global stage demonstrating that our small sizes do not deter us from achieving results comparable to those of our more developed neighbours," she said.

Persad-Bissessar said the history of successful entry into the Central American markets has been supported by the trading agreement that currently exists between Caricom and Costa Rica.

"In our relationship with the wider Caribbean and Latin America, Trinidad and Tobago is seeking to build closer economic ties and opportunities to improve our trade in services," she said.

She also said developing innovative strategies is in keeping with the country's policy of developing sustainable growth and diversifying the economy, as we must reduce our dependence on the energy sector, which is currently the main source of revenue.

"We see stronger trade ties leading to higher levels of investment and



PRIME MINISTER Kamla Persad Bissessar, centre, poses with president of the TT Chamber of Industry and Commerce (TTCIC) and participants of the forum at an opening cocktail reception of the Connecting the Caribbean to Central America Exploring and Seizing New Opportunities forum at the Diplomatic Centre, last Tuesday. PHOTOS BY ROGER JACOB

employment, generating new sources of wealth and prosperity and generally contributing to a higher quality of life for all our citizens," she said.

Persad-Bissessar gave the assurance that Government was committed to deepening the trade and economic relationship between Central America and the Caribbean.

"We have seen a shift in trading patterns internationally and we have seen the way in which many of our countries weathered the financial crisis the world has been through. We must ask ourselves, why don't we seek solutions that are home grown or reflective of collaboration among ourselves?" she said.

She said the opening of the widened Panama Canal presents an opportunity for the country to do creative things.

"We need to solve the transport dilemma that has plagued our trade in



CABCORP, the Central American Beverage Corporation display its products at the bar at the Hyatt Regency, Port-of- Spain.

the past. The time has come to find new ways to move goods and services in the Caribbean Basin," she said.



PRESIDENT of the Guatemala Chamber of Commerce Juan Antonio Busto presents his TT counterpart, Angella Persad with one of his country's treasures and popular exports, rum during a reception at the Hyatt Regency.