Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

TTMA President's Dinner and Awards 2026

Remarks by

Senator the Honourable Satyakama Maharaj

Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism

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Good evening.
It is a true honor to be in the company of the extraordinary women and men who define Trinidad and Tobago's commercial prowess tonight. For 70 years, the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association has served as the undisputed voice of business enterprise.

For a manufacturer, there is a particular satisfaction in securing that first overseas order. Someone in another country has chosen your product, backed your business and given you a chance to prove yourself.

The second order means something more. It means you delivered. The quality held, the shipment arrived and the customer wants to do business with you again. That is how a local business begins to build a global reputation.

Tonight's theme, "From Local Business to Global Champions", speaks directly to that journey. And tonight's awards recognise the people doing the demanding work behind it.

Having spent decades in manufacturing, I know how much happens before a finished product reaches a shelf. I know what it means to invest in equipment, develop a product and carry responsibility for the people whose livelihoods depend on the business. I also know the pride of seeing something made here earn its place in a market abroad.

So, to our nominees and award recipients, my congratulations come with a real appreciation of what your achievements have required. They belong, too, to the production teams, technicians, sales staff and many others whose work sustains your success.

I commend the TTMA for giving that work the recognition it deserves, and for its sustained advocacy on behalf of manufacturers. Your role in connecting businesses with buyers and bringing the practical concerns of industry to Government remains essential.

We are also pleased to welcome Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre. Her experience supporting Caribbean enterprise and helping smaller businesses participate in international trade brings a valuable perspective to this evening's theme.

Becoming a global champion requires a business to earn trust repeatedly. Buyers must be confident that the next shipment will meet the same standard as the last, and that a larger order will receive the same care as a smaller one. That confidence is built through investment in people, reliable production and the willingness to keep improving.

Government has a responsibility in that journey as well. A manufacturer working to meet a delivery date needs public services that understand the cost of delay. A business preparing to enter a new market needs clear requirements and practical assistance. An enterprise ready to expand needs a predictable environment in which to invest.

That is the standard against which our work at the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism must be judged. Our efforts to digitise processes, facilitate investment through Special Economic Zones and support market access must make a practical difference to the firms using them. Trade missions should help businesses develop commercial relationships that continue well beyond the visit.

Our partnership with the TTMA is important to getting this right. Your experience helps identify where procedures hold businesses back and where support can make the greatest difference. We must keep that dialogue focused on resolving problems and enabling growth.

As established manufacturers expand, I also encourage you to help create room for the next generation. Developing a local supplier, mentoring an emerging exporter or training a young technician strengthens the productive capacity on which the whole sector depends.

For Trinidad and Tobago, the value of manufacturing reaches well beyond the factory gate. It supports

families, creates demand for local services and earns foreign exchange. Every business that competes successfully abroad helps build confidence in what this country can produce.

To tonight’s award recipients: enjoy this recognition. You have earned it. May your success encourage another business to pursue its first export order, and give the people working alongside you even greater confidence in what they can achieve.

Congratulations, and thank you.