

## Business chambers congratulate TPP

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BUSINESS chambers have welcomed the Tobago People's Party (TPP) and praised the people of Tobago for exercising their democratic rights following the party's 15-0 victory in the Tobago House of Assembly election.

In a release yesterday, the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce acknowledged the results of the election and congratulated all newly elected THA members on their victory.

'The Chamber also commends the people of Tobago for exercising their democratic right and participating peacefully in the electoral process. The Chamber, via our Tobago Division, will continue to work in the best interest of T&T,' the release stated.

The T&T Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI) also expressed congratulations and highlighted the TPP's work over the past four years.

'Your dedication and hard work over the past four years, coupled with your steadfast commitment to the people of Tobago and all stakeholders, have undoubtedly led to this well-deserved victory. This new mandate presents a valuable opportunity to build upon your achievements and continue advancing Tobago toward its full potential,' the TTCSI stated in a release.

It added that as the national umbrella organisation for the services sector, it looks forward to deepening its collaboration with the Tobago House of Assembly in 2026 and beyond.

'Together, we can further strengthen the service industries across T&T, empowering our citizens to export their talents and expertise to the international market, thereby contributing to sustainable growth and prosperity for our twin-island nation,' it stated. T&T Manufacturers' Association (TTMA) president Dale Parson said the TTMA looks forward to partnering on TPP's blueprint for continued collaboration in Tobago. He said some of these initiatives included small to medium- sized enterprise manufacturing, the Trade and Investment Convention 2026, continued infrastructure development, job creation, and tourism development, which offer manufacturing opportunities in supply chains and construction supply.

'Mr Farley Augustine has always been an avid supporter of TTMA, attending each and every TTMA event. We are confident that under his leadership, Tobago, the Government of Trinidad, and the TTMA manufacturing sector can collaborate to make us an even greater nation over the next five years,' said Parson.

Augustine led the TPP to victory on Monday night.

The Confederation of Regional Business Chambers (CRBC) stated that the TPP's victory shows that the people of Tobago have clearly exercised their democratic choice, and Augustine now 'enjoys strong popular support'.

'The Tobago Chamber, together with the CRBC, has consistently articulated the business community's concerns, particularly regarding the air and sea bridge, through engagements with the Ministry of Transport and other stakeholders,' the CRBC noted in a statement to the *Express*.

It added that the issues have also been raised jointly in discussions with the Chief of Police, reflecting the private sector's commitment to practical collaboration in addressing Tobago's development challenges.

'Our hope is to see Tobago's business environment prosper through the creation of new economic opportunities, continued improvement in tourism, increased private-sector investment, lower crime, and, ultimately, enhanced prosperity for the citizens of Tobago,' the CRBC stated.

It added that these are 'ambitious but necessary objectives'.

'The electorate has made its choice, and with that choice comes understandably high expectations. The CRBC stands ready, through its Tobago Chamber, to engage constructively in support of sustainable economic growth and national development,' it added.

President of the Chaguanas Chamber of Industry and Commerce Baldath Maharaj said the chamber views TPP's victory 'as a powerful signal of stability that the business community should not ignore'.

'This absolute mandate for Chief Secretary Farley Augustine provides a great window for decisive policy-making, and from our perspective in Central Trinidad, we expect this to translate into more streamlined opportunities for inter-island trade,' said Maharaj.

He added that the chamber's expectations under Augustine's leadership are centred on him pursuing private partnerships and the long-awaited digital transformation of the Assembly's administrative processes, which would significantly reduce the friction currently

faced by Trinidad-based firms looking to invest in Tobago.

'We are particularly keen to see how this renewed administration addresses the reliability of the air and sea bridge, the literal lifeline for our members, as well as its commitment to local food security and tourism infrastructure. While the political message is clear, the chamber's focus remains on the economic multiplier effect,' said Maharaj.

He added that a self-sufficient and prosperous Tobago creates a more resilient national economy.

'We look forward to exploring ventures that bridge the gap between the commercial heartbeat of Chaguanas and the emerging markets of a unified Tobago,' said Maharaj.

He added that it may also be a good idea to revisit the Sandals project-which, he believes, if successful, would generate the necessary forex as well as additional airlift that the sister isle needs.

'Several of our members invested in real estate rentals in Tobago via hotels and Airbnb and would benefit from this additional airlift,' said Maharaj.



