

## NCB Merchant Bank to guide WITL's expansion drive

NCB Merchant Bank (Trinidad and Tobago) Ltd has been appointed financial advisor to West Indian Traders Ltd (WITL) as the company advances a major expansion plan aimed at strengthening its distribution network across the country and the wider Caribbean. A release from NCB Merchant Bank yesterday stated that the project will see the development of a new warehousing and logistics facility on 87,000 square feet of land in El Socorro.

Construction is expected to begin later this year with completion targeted for 2027, the company said. The expansion forms part of WITL's broader strategy to increase its distribution capacity, introduce new product categories, and improve operational efficiency amid growing demand across regional markets, it stated, Managing director of WITL, Jake Gillette, described the initiative as a key step in the company's longterm growth plans.

'This represents the natural next step in our multi-aisle distribution strategy and our vision of being in every aisle and every store. As the market evolves toward more diverse, multi-temperature product offerings, it is essential that we evolve alongside our customers and partners,' Gillette stated, 'This facility will allow us to operate more efficiently while expanding into new areas of distribution,' he stated.

Gillette noted that the expansion reflects the company's response to shifting market demand and emphasised the importance of securing the right advisory partner for a project of this scale.

'Executing an initiative of this scale requires strong advisory support. We value the experience and insight NCB Merchant Bank Ltd brings to this process and are pleased to have them as one of our partners,' he said.

The release stated that the new facility will feature modern warehouse design, digitised inventory management systems, and infrastructure to accommodate both ambient and temperature-controlled products. The development is expected to enhance WITL's ability to serve existing partners while attracting new suppliers seeking reliable distribution channels.

Chief executive officer of NCB Merchant Bank, Marli Creese, said the appointment aligns with the bank's focus on supporting business expansion in key sectors.

'We are pleased to support West Indian Traders Ltd on this important project. Our role is to provide clear, practical advice across financing and capital structuring so that the company can execute its plans with confidence and stability,' Creese said.

The release highlighted that demand for chilled and frozen fast-moving consumer goods continues to rise across Trinidad and the Caribbean, driven by changing consumer preferences and increasing demand for convenience products. It added that WITL has confirmed that expansion into these categories will form part of its next phase of growth. 'With this investment, WITL is positioning itself to scale its operations and strengthen its role within the regional distribution landscape,' the release stated.