



MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

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Talks Begin for Intra-Regional Transportation Ferry System

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MEDIA RELEASE

On Thursday 15th February 2024, a team of high power officials met at the Ministry of Works and Transport, Trinidad and Tobago to initiate discussions on the operationalization of an Intra-Regional Ferry Service.

Hosted by Senator the Honourable Rohan Sinanan Minister of Works and Transport, other regional Ministers included, the Honourable G.P. Ian Gooding-Edghill, Minister of Tourism and International Transport (Barbados) and the Honourable Deodat Indar Minister within the Ministry of Public Works (Guyana). Dr. Pauline Yearwood, Deputy Programme Manager Directorate of Trade and Economic Integration, Caribbean Community Secretariat and other regional officials in the areas of Immigration, Customs and Plant Quarantine were also present.

Intra-regional transportation has remained a focus of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for several years. In 2022, CARICOM Heads of Government as part of the regional thrust to achieve the *Twenty-Five by 2025 Initiative*, namely, to reduce CARICOM's food import bill by 25% by the year 2025, identified the lack of regional transportation as a major challenge to regional security and the movement of agricultural products throughout the Region.

At the meeting, chaired by the Honourable Deodat Indar, Minister within the Ministry of Public Works, each Minister reiterated the objective verbalized by leaders of the three CARICOM States to promote regional food security. Toward this end, it was identified that the three countries were on the cusp of the formation of a Company to drive the process for the introduction of a regional ferry service. This Company would comprise Directors from each country to facilitate operations.

The meeting also focused on the issues surrounding possible preclearance in the three areas of customs, immigration and plant quarantine. The present position in each area was identified by representatives and each delegation undertook to meet and provide details of possible issues and solutions based on the respective areas. A commitment was given that the highest level of public health, security and safety would be maintained. In charting the way forward, Ministers of each country took responsibility for the coordination of a specific area which technical teams would address.

Minister Rohan Sinanan stated that Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to be a part of this significant initiative which seeks to benefit the wider Caribbean by facilitating greater integration for the free movement of goods and services.



(L-R first row) The Honourable G.P. Ian Gooding-Edghill, Minister of Tourism and International Transport (Barbados), Senator the Honourable Rohan Sinanan, Minister of Works and Transport (Trinidad and Tobago), Dr. Pauline Yearwood, Deputy Programme Manager Directorate of Trade and Economic Integration, Caribbean Community Secretariat, the Honourable Deodat Indar Minister within the Ministry of Public Works (Guyana) and other regional representatives at the meeting for the operationalization of an Intra-Regional Ferry Service.

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