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**TO: NEWS EDITORS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Chamber welcomes the end to the SoE

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce welcomes the end of the State of Emergency from midnight on December 5, 2011, as declared by the Honourable Prime Minister.

When first implemented on August 21, the private sector was in support of the SoE, as it signaled a determination by the nation's leadership to finally reign in runaway crime - particularly with the upsurge in murders and gang-related violence that was taking a stranglehold on the nation. We maintained our support of the SoE during the ensuing months, despite losses incurred by several sectors of the business community especially while the curfew hours were in effect.

Over the three-month period of the SoE, the Chamber does recognise some achievements in the fight against crime – including the drug hauls, the notable reduction in serious crime and gang warfare, and the increase in intelligence gathering from our security forces. However, the Chamber must also express a level of disappointment and dissatisfaction with the utilization of the Anti-Gang Legislation during the first months of the SoE, particularly since all persons detained under this piece of Legislation were subsequently released due to insufficient evidence – or none at all – with some now taking legal action against the State for wrongful detention.

It is our hope that coming out of this, the government and its advisory security forces will utilize the lessons learned from the past three months and will revisit and implement more effective legal and security measures to ensure that there is no repeat of what took place. We also trust that the government will be using its intelligence gathered to continue to make significant in-roads in thwarting gang violence in Trinidad and Tobago. The constant policing and relentless enforcement of all the nation's laws, which was evident during the SoE, must be maintained to ensure that we do not lose ground already won.

With several new proposals put forward by the government to help reduce crime, the Chamber looks forward to hearing of a comprehensive National Crime Plan in order to sustain the current low levels of serious crime.

The Chamber reiterates our commitment to working with our national leadership to help in the fight against crime and so restore our image as a safe and secure place to conduct business.

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