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### **CHAMBER VIEWS ON THE \$.6B DRUG FIND**

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce is deeply concerned with any practice that allows any illegal substance to be shipped from our shores, which would, of course, affect our ability to do legal business with the international community. We, however, respect that the law enforcement officers of both the United States and T&T have their investigations to complete, in the case of the \$.6B cocaine find, and so we will await word on the conclusion of these investigations.

While the government recently successfully concluded the re-negotiation of the Double Tax Treaty Agreement between T&T and Germany, which aims to foster deeper business relationships between the two countries and promote economic development, the Chamber met with German Embassy officials just last week, who expressed to us their concerns with the level of crime and security within T&T.

This week, the Chamber is part of two delegations which are engaging in bi-lateral trade agreements between T&T-EI Salvador and a CARICOM/Canada Free Trade Agreement respectively – we believe that the issue of illegal substances originating from T&T shipments will certainly be a concern to our North and Central America neighbours, and it may hamper our trading relationships with them in the medium to long term. We agree with the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association that this is an issue which can hurt our thriving manufacturing sector and the reputation of T&T. Our local manufacturers have worked hard over many years to develop and maintain their international image and have built an excellent reputation for their products in foreign markets. The Chamber would not like to see the continuance of any actions by any parties which could cause irreparable damage to their hard work.

We are aware that the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment is working with the various business organizations and looking at improving our procedures and processes with respect to international shipments. The Chamber will continue to be engaged with the Ministry, other facilitating arms of government and members of the business community in this regard.

**MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**