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**TO: NEWS EDITORS – For Immediate Release**

### **CHAMBER VIEWS ON DANA SEETAHAL, S.C. MURDER AND NATIONAL CRIME SITUATION**

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce expresses its unreserved shock over the brazen, execution-style murder of Dana Seetahal, S.C. We firstly send our condolences to the Seetahal family. We join the rest of the national community in our deep sadness over Ms Seetahal's murder. There continues to be a seemingly unabated killing spree, with the majority of murders being committed with the use of guns. This is not the first time that a high profile national has been the victim of such an execution. We now are left to ask: "Who will be next?"

Comparing the January to March period in 2013 to the same period this year, there has been an almost 10% increase in reported murders. In the past week we have seen the murder toll raised to well over 150, according to reports, with four persons being murdered within the space of less than 24 hours. Detection rates continue to be abysmally low. We also note with dismay that even when arrests are made, the situation within our criminal justice system is no more encouraging, with cases taking far too long to be concluded.

The statements by the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Security and the Acting Commissioner of Police that all resources will be directed to solving this case ring hollow after many years of calls by the Chamber and other groups for our national security agencies to take serious measures to address crime – particularly murders.

ALL of our nationals deserve to live in an environment of safety, and while we believe that all stakeholders must have a part to play in this regard, we strongly believe that the National Security Council, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Justice and the police service who are on the frontlines of this fight against crime, must play a greater role. The Chamber finds it outrageous that year after year, the basic infrastructure necessary for a properly functioning system of law and order cannot be put into place – the system for the appointment of a permanent Police Commissioner is one such issue that comes to mind.

This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

The Chamber is of the strong belief that more must be done to stem the tide of guns coming past our borders and into our nation, and so help abate the escalation of gun-related crimes. We certainly believe that there must be an increase in the detection

rates and, in conjunction with that, much more must also be done to ensure that our criminal justice system serves the law abiding public. If we fail at this, the forces of organised crime will continue to prevail.

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