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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce Welcomes New Member – Marine Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MSATT)**

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce (T&T Chamber) is pleased to welcome the Marine Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MSATT) as its newest member. Kiran Maharaj, President, stated, *“We are pleased to welcome the Marine Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MSATT) as a member of the T&T Chamber. Their inclusion strengthens our collective efforts to enhance the marine sector, and we look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders to address the challenges facing this vital industry. The T&T Chamber has repeatedly emphasized that we must work quickly to improve our non-energy sectors and support the infrastructure to catalyze our economic growth. This sector is a low-hanging fruit and needs urgent support and attention.”* Peter Peake, President of the Marine Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MSATT), noted that, *“As President of MSATT, it is with great pride and anticipation that we join the TT Chamber. This partnership marks a significant step towards fostering collaboration, innovation and growth within our marine services sector and the broader business community. Together, we are committed to advancing industry standards, driving economic development, and enhancing the global competitiveness of Trinidad and Tobago. We look forward to the opportunities ahead and the shared success that will come from this union.”*

The marine sector plays a vital role in the economic development of Trinidad and Tobago, contributing significantly to tourism, job creation, and international trade. We believe that by collaborating with all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Trade and Industry, we can address the challenges currently facing the industry and unlock its full potential.

The marine services sector including the yacht and superyacht industry are important but underutilized segments of the marine sector. Unfortunately, we have seen several instances where visiting yacht and superyacht clients, along with their captains and crew, have expressed frustration with outdated procedures and a general feeling of being unwelcome in Trinidad and Tobago. These sentiments have negatively impacted the businesses that provide concierge and support services to this industry, which otherwise offers immense value to our economy.

In comparison, our Caribbean neighbors have taken a proactive stance, creating a welcoming environment for the marine industry. Countries like Grenada and others up the island chain have developed streamlined processes and infrastructure that bring in millions of US dollars every winter season. It is imperative that Trinidad and Tobago follow suit to remain competitive in this

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lucrative sector.

## **Key Challenges Facing the Marine Industry**

For over 20 years, the marine industry in Trinidad and Tobago has faced persistent challenges, which continue to hinder its growth. Some of the key areas requiring immediate attention include:

### **Immigration and Customs Procedures:**

Unlike other Caribbean islands, which use online systems for maritime clearances, our outdated manual processes result in unnecessary fees and delays. Implementing a digital clearance system will help ease the burden on clients. A single harmonized form allowing cruising within our island's port vicinities (Chaguaramas, Scarborough, and Charlotteville) is already prepared but not yet implemented. This would eliminate the need for separate clearances for each port and simplify the process for visiting vessels.

### **Regulations for Moving Between Ports:**

The current requirement for captains to navigate complex immigration and customs procedures between ports creates undue stress and acts as a disincentive for those managing large vessels and crews. The adoption of a single-stamp system, already in use elsewhere in the Caribbean, would be a significant improvement.

### **Helicopter Regulations for Vessels:**

There are currently no formal regulations for vessels arriving with on-board helicopters, leading to embarrassing and inconvenient situations for visiting superyachts. Establishing clear, streamlined procedures for helicopter operations, as seen in neighboring islands, is urgently needed.

### **Lack of Adequate Superyacht Berthing Facilities:**

Trinidad and Tobago lack sufficient berthing facilities for large luxury vessels. Existing marinas can only accommodate a limited number of superyachts, and even those lack essential utilities such as water, electricity, and sanitation services to attract and retain superyacht visits, the construction of a dedicated superyacht marina, as well as interim upgrades to the Hyatt Waterfront and Scarborough Port facilities, is crucial.

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## **Collaborative Solutions for the Future**

The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce remains committed to working with MSATT and all stakeholders to develop practical solutions to these issues. By partnering with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, we aim to address these longstanding challenges and ensure that Trinidad and Tobago become a more welcoming and competitive destination for the marine services industry.

We believe that with the right infrastructure and regulatory reforms, Trinidad and Tobago can capitalize on the immense opportunities presented by this sector, creating jobs, driving economic growth, earning valuable foreign exchange and positioning our country as a premier destination for the global marine services industry.

In Photo left to right: Kiran Maharaj, President of the T&T Chamber; Peter Peake, President of MSATT; Vashti Guyadeen, CEO of the T&T Chamber and Jesse James, Vice President of MSATT.

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