

TTMA ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD
25-year-old Emil Ramkissoon is the youngest director to be appointed

Port of Spain, Wednesday, April 8th, 2020 -Today, the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association held its 64th Annual Meeting using a digital platform. With a growing membership of 536 businesses, 60% of whom are SMEs, the Association reviewed the last year and addressed the need for adaptability to a new norm with the impact of Covid-19.

Five Director positions were opened for voting and for the first time in years, the voting was opened to the ‘floor’ using an online tool managed by auditing firm, Aegis. Three former directors offered themselves for directorship in 2020 and were given the vote of confidence by the membership. These are Ms. Tricia Coosal of Coosal’s Group of Companies, Mr. Ian Mitchell of Ansa Polymer, and Mr. Dale Parson of Kaleidoscope Group Limited. Joining these three are Mr. Roger Roach of Lazuri Apparel Limited, along with newcomer, 25-year old Mr. Emil Ramkissoon, owner and Director of New Wave Marketing – a PVC entrepreneurship that is almost 100% digitally operated and with exports to several countries across the globe.

Ms. Franka Costelloe, Director of Lifetime Solutions has retained the position of President for another year and Mr. Ryan Lewis and Ms. Tricia Coosal were appointed as Vice Presidents and Mr. Dale Parson was appointed as Corporate Secretary.

Ms. Costelloe recapped activities that supported the business growth and expansion agenda, which is central to the TTMA Manufacturing Strategy. Among those, she listed the 2019 TIC flagship event, which had 272 sponsored booths with exhibitors from over 32 countries and 17,000 persons attending. The Annual President’s Dinner and Awards is now in its 8th year and recognises leaders of business and new enterprise. The President also cited some additional events that continue to contribute to the growth agenda, which included workshops and seminars on Labour Productivity, Trade Facilitation, Migrant Labour, Pre-Budget Discussions, along with seminars on doing business with the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Colombia.

Advocacy initiatives in 2019 focussed on VAT Refunds, FX Shortage, the Beverage Container Bill and Illicit Trade. Others included Corporation Tax Regime simplification, Eteck Land regularisation, Front of Pack Labelling, Import Duty Simplification, Procurement Legislation, Property Tax Reform and the Styrofoam ban.

The Proudly T&T Campaign resulted in some 50-plus manufacturers being hosted at the TIC and CARIFESTA. The PTT initiative has also contributed to flood relief, support for athletes, scholarships for 30 entrepreneurs and a clean-up exercise at Chacachacare. This year, a timely response has been the distribution of Hand Sanitizers to the public, donated by Angostura.

Critical to the 2020 membership needs, the new Board plans to intensify lobbying and support for SMEs to springboard them into export, using the digital 4.0 transformation. Ms. Costelloe says, “With technology advancements, financing opportunities and growing demand for novel products, the SMEs are better equipped than larger companies to make these quick changes.

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