



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Filing of the First Geographical Indication (GI) Application in Trinidad & Tobago**

The Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs, Intellectual Property Office of Trinidad and Tobago (“TTIPO”), has been working closely with the Montserrat Cocoa Farmers’ Co-operative Society Limited (“MCFCSL”) through Mrs. Olive Ramchand, Senior Partner, Fitzwilliam Stone Furness-Smith & Morgan to facilitate the filing of the first Geographical Indication (“GI”) application in Trinidad and Tobago under the Geographical Indications Act, Chap. 82:78. This is also the first GI application for cocoa in CARICOM.

The Ministry is pleased to announce that on 17th February, 2017 the first GI was filed in Trinidad and Tobago by the Montserrat Cocoa Farmers’ Co-operative Society for cocoa beans originating in the Montserrat Hills, Gran Couva. Trinitario cocoa has an international reputation as a fine-flavoured cocoa and is coveted worldwide by renowned chocolatiers.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, (“WIPO”) a GI is a mark used to identify a good coming from a specific geographical area with a unique quality, reputation or characteristic which is essentially attributable to the geographical area. Some well-known examples of GIs include Champagne, Darjeeling Tea, Scotch Whiskey and Roquefort cheese. These names are recognizable throughout the world as having originated from a particular geographical area and thus, have a certain quality, reputation or characteristic that is attributable to the area.

The registration of a GI provides for significant benefits. GIs not only attract a higher price premium in the local, regional and international markets but also contribute to country branding and enhancement of a country’s reputation. GIs also promote and enhance rural development, local

culture and traditions. As such, Trinidad and Tobago stands to benefit substantially from the registration of GIs.

Recognizing the significant benefits of GIs, the IPO has been actively engaging representatives from the local cocoa, honey and pepper industries. The IPO recently hosted a One Day Workshop on GIs on 9th February, 2017. The objective of this Workshop was to sensitize various stakeholders on GIs and to raise awareness of the various types of intellectual property protection for their products. Participants included representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, MCFCSL, Trinidad and Tobago Beekeepers' Association, Cocoa Research Centre (UWI), Carmel Valley Estate, Vista Dora Estate, Ortinola Estate, All Trinidad and Tobago Apicultural Co-operative Society Limited and Westland for Green.

This Workshop was a precursor to the WIPO/IDB-REACH Workshop on Optimizing the Competitiveness of Geographical Indications (GIs) and Origin-Linked Products (OLPs) for Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Countries which was held on 14th-16th February, 2017 at the UWI, St. Augustine. This Workshop included international experts on GIs who provided pertinent information on the international systems of protection for GIs.

The IPO is optimistic that the first GI application for cocoa beans in Trinidad and Tobago and the English-speaking Caribbean, will pave the road for other GI applications in the near future. The Office remains committed to assisting applicants in this regard.



Filing of the first GI application at the Intellectual Property Office.

Pictured above (L-R): Mr. Raffique Ali, Board Member (MCFCSL), Mr. Ronald Bhagan, Vice President (MCFCSL), Mr. Anacletus Jude Lee Sam, Board Member (MCFCSL), Ms. Phyllis Borde, Manager/Secretary (MCFCSL), Mr. Christopher Paul President (MCFCSL), Mrs. Olive Ramchand, Senior Partner, Fitzwilliam Stone Furness-Smith & Morgan, Ms. Shelly-Ann Benny, Procedures Assistant (Ag.) (IPO), Ms. Shiveta Sooknanan, Legal Officer II (IPO), Mr. Regan Asgarali, Controller, Ag. (IPO), Mr. Richard Aching, Manager, Technical Examination (IPO) and Ms. Anne Marie Omed Joseph, Deputy Controller, Ag. (IPO)



The first GI application filed in Trinidad and Tobago by the Montserrat Cocoa Farmers' Co-operative Society for cocoa beans originating in the Montserrat Hills, Gran Couva.

Pictured above (L-R): Mr. Richard Aching, Manager, Technical Examination (IPO), Mrs. Olive Ramchand, Senior Partner, Fitzwilliam Stone Furness-Smith & Morgan, Mr. Regan Asgarali, Controller, Ag. (IPO) and Ms. Shiveta Sooknanan, Legal Officer II (IPO)



Pictured above: Chocolate produced from the Montserrat Cocoa by the MCFCSL.

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DATED: February 17<sup>th</sup> 2017