



# TRINITARIO COCOA WEBINAR SERIES

*Episode 2 – Trinidad and Tobago: An International Centre for Cocoa Excellence and Innovation.*  
Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 10:00am (AST)



Cocoa  
Research  
Centre

# Event Agenda

- 10:00 – 10:05 am (AST) **Opening Remarks** – *Sekou Alleyne, President InvesTT*
- 10:05 – 10:20 am **Ministers/ VIP Presentations**  
*Moderator - Ms. Jessie-May Ventour, Veteran Broadcaster*
  - **Peter Cavendish, Ambassador** – Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago
  - **Senator the Hon. Paula Gopee-Scoon**, Minister of Trade and Industry
  - **Senator the Hon. Avinash Singh**, Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries
- 10:20 – 10:50 am **Cocoa Excellence and Innovation in Trinidad and Tobago – Panel Discussion #1**  
*Moderator - Ms. Jessie-May Ventour,*
  - **Professor Pathmanathan Umaharan**, Director – Cocoa Research Centre, UWI (*Cocoa Estate Business Models*)
  - **Tobias Schulze Frenking** - Co-Founder & Director, Ubergreen T&T (*Organic fine cocoa and chocolate cluster project – capacity building*)
  - **Hayden Ferreira** – Chairman, CARIRI (*Amplifying Cocoa Innovation and Entrepreneurship in T&T*)
  - **Sekou Alleyne**, President InvesTT (*Developing Cocoa Excellence in T&T*)
- 10:50 – 11:05 am **Q & A moderated by Jessie-May**



# Event Agenda Continued

- 11:05 – 11:35 am **Trailblazing Women Cocoa Entrepreneurs in Trinidad and Tobago – Panel Discussion #2**  
*Moderator - Pramilla Ramdahani , VP Investments, InvestTT*  
  
*Video introduction precedes each panelist.*
  - **Isabel Brash** – *Chocolate Maker & Managing Director, Cocobel Chocolate*
  - **Elizabeth ‘Lady’ Montano**, *Montano’s Chocolate Company*
  - **Nikita Nath** – *Director & Bean to Bar Chocolate Maker, Ortinola Estates*
- 11:35 – 12:00 am **Q & A moderated by Pramilla Ramdahani & Closing Remarks**



## Senator the Honourable Paula GOPEE-SCOON

- Senator Gopee-Scoon is the **Minister of Trade and Industry** which is one of the frontline ministries within the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that leads the drive to position the country as a manufacturing base, and the business, trade and financial hub of the Caribbean.
- As Minister, her aim is to build upon and expand programs which improve the export capacity of the local manufacturing sector. She leads the charge towards stimulating domestic and foreign investments while implementing policies to enhance the global competitiveness of Trinidad and Tobago. She believes in continuous stakeholder engagement to ensure participation in the growth and development of all sectors for a sustainable and vibrant economy.
- The work of InvesTT in this regard falls directly under the purview of the Ministry of Trade and Industry.





# The Honourable Minister Avinash SINGH

- Minister Avinash Singh is the **Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries**
- Mr. Avinash Singh was first appointed as an Opposition Senator in December, 2013. He entered national politics when he was selected as the candidate for the People's National Movement for the Chaguanas West bye-election held on the 29th of July 2013. He was then appointed in September 2015 as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries. On August 19, 2020 he was appointed as Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries.
- He is the holder of a Bachelor of Science Degree majoring in Environmental and Natural Resource Management and in Agricultural Science from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. He recently obtained his Masters of Business Administration from Anglia Ruskin University.
- He represented Trinidad and Tobago and the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago on various workshops and seminars regionally. Minister Singh's mission is to succeed in an environment of growth and excellence while undertaking challenging assignments and responsibilities which provides him with job satisfaction and self-development.





## His Excellency Mr. Peter CAVENDISH

- Peter Cavendish was accredited as **EU Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago** on July 22nd, 2021. He hails from Dublin, Ireland and has worked for EU institutions since 1995.
- Mr Cavendish has held a number of roles including as Head of Sector, Directorate-General ECHO Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, Head of Division, Financial Control of EU Delegations, Head of Division, Inspection of EU Delegations and Head of Division, Security of EU Delegations.
- Prior to joining the Commission, he worked in the financial and petro-chemical sectors.
- He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and a Master of Business Studies, from the University College of Dublin.



# Sekou ALLEYNE

Sekou Alleyne is the **President of InvestTT**



- Sekou Alleyne is a strategic business development professional,
- He attained his MBA from the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Business and earned his Bachelor of Commerce at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.
- He has leveraged his extensive background in Toronto's real estate development and leasing market to play a leading role in the investor attraction effort in InvestTT since its inception.
- Mr. Alleyne was intimately involved in the attraction and facilitation, of the set-up of Trinidad and Tobago's first international Call Centre, iQor, which now has three locations in Trinidad.
- His primary focus at InvestTT, the national investment promotion agency of Trinidad and Tobago, is to strategically improve the visibility of Trinidad and Tobago as an investment destination of choice and to improve the ranking of the IPA in terms of its ability to attract new investments.





## Professor Pathmanathan UMAHARAN

- Prof. Path Umaharan is the **Director of the Cocoa Research Centre, The University of the West Indies St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.**
- Professor Umaharan is responsible for policy, strategic direction and governance of the Cocoa Research Centre. He is an expert in plant genetic resources management, genetic analysis and crop improvement.
- He has worked with several crops including cocoa, anthurium, hot pepper, tomato, cowpea, and pigeon pea, specifically with respect to genetic resistance to pest and diseases, yield and yield components as well as quality.
- The centre also curates the International Cocoa Genebank, Trinidad the largest and most diverse cocoa collection globally and houses the International Fine Cocoa Innovation Centre. The latter serves as a public-private sector interface promoting innovations and commercialisation along the cocoa value chain.





## Tobias Schulze FRENKING

- Tobias Schulze Frenking is the **Cluster Manager - Organic Fine Cocoa and Chocolate Cluster and Co-founder and Director, Ubergreen T&T.**
- Tobias is a project manager and consultant with over twelve years' project management experience in the Caribbean, Europe, and South America, working with international development agencies, academia, and not-for-profit organizations.
- He specializes in innovative business and sector development, resilient business models, and financing new ventures.
- Tobias currently lectures on International Trade, Logistics, Finance, and Public Sector Policy while writing his Doctor of Business Administration dissertation.
- Tobias is Co-Founder of Ubergreen, a consulting and trading group of companies.





## Hayden FERREIRA

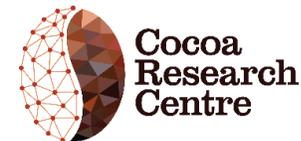
- Hayden Ferreira is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of The Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI).
- Established in 1970, CARIRI has been a reputable name in the Region, an invaluable Caribbean asset which is a multifaceted Institution providing service in the areas of:
  - Laboratory and field testing
  - Consulting
  - Research and Development
  - Training
- Since its establishment, CARIRI has become a widely recognized centre of excellence, leading and serving through innovation and technology and is committed to local and regional development.
- Owned by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, CARIRI was established with the technical and financial assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).





## Elizabeth 'Lady' MONTANO

- Elizabeth 'Lady' Montano is the **Director, Montanos' Chocolate Company Ltd.**
- Elizabeth Montano, famously known as Lady Montano, is a celebrated Caribbean business woman best known for building a legendary personal brand for her son, Machel Montano, an internationally renowned music artist.
- During her 40 years of legacy-building, Lady Montano also played an integral role in contributing to the teaching, guiding, and counseling of students of differing educational and emotional needs. In addition to her adept ability to counsel and mentor, Lady Montano has a discerning eye for identifying business opportunities.
- In 2014 upon entering the chocolate confectionary market with a branded 50g chocolate bar aptly called "Happy Nation" as it was a Valentine's Day and Carnival promotion, Lady Montano recognized that there was great opportunity in the growing cocoa industry in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Thereafter the Montanos' Chocolate Company Ltd, a family owned and operated chocolate and chocolate product company was established. Lady Montano has since led the charge in establishing the Montanos' Chocolate Factory which now produces chocolate bars, cocoa nibs, cocoa powder and cocoa butter. Lady Montano is currently preparing to enter the export market with the fast expanding portfolio of Montanos' Chocolate products.





## Isabel BRASH

- Isabel Brash is the **Chocolate Maker & Managing Director, Cocobel Chocolate.**
- Cocobel Chocolate is the brainchild and creation of Isabel Brash.
- Isabel is a trained architect turned chocolatier who designed the contemporary gingerbread house where Cocobel and the Medulla Art Gallery are located, in Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain.
- As the creator of all Cocobel fine flavour chocolate products, it's safe to say that Isabel's chocolates reflect the balance of form and function as they are just as delightful to look at as they are to eat.
- Cocobel Chocolate is fine flavour, single estate chocolate crafted since 2008 from Trinitario beans harvested mainly from Rancho Quemado in south Trinidad. Cocobel pioneered the movement to artisanal chocolate blended with local fruit and spices that celebrate and speak of Trinidad and Tobago's culinary heritage.
- Cocobel makes about 50 different chocolate products, including bonbons or truffles, barks, dragées and bars. Local fruits - pineapple, mango, guava - condiments and spices are processed in the Cocobel kitchen to ensure that the confections are true to taste and





## Nikita NATH

- Nikita Nath is the **Director & Bean to Bar Chocolate-Maker, Ortinola.**
- Ms. Nikita Nath is a bean to bar chocolate-maker, entrepreneur, tour guide and consultant who manages the tour and chocolate aspects of her family business in Trinidad and Tobago, the Ortinola Great House.
- Nikita studied Biotechnology at the University of Edinburgh, and her dream was always to work in cocoa research to combine two of her favourite things; science and chocolate.
- She returned to the family business due to her love for Ortinola, and the promise of realizing the estate's inherent agricultural and tourism potential.
- Under her direction, Ortinola then diversified into cocoa bean production and export, value-addition in the form of artisanal chocolate production, tours, and chocolate-making workshops.
- Ortinola Chocolates can now be found in London, Japan, and Trinidad, and Ortinola's bean to bar tours are now a firmly established historical and educational experience in the local tourism landscape.





## Pramilla RAMDAHANI *(Panel Moderator)*

- Pramilla Ramdahani is the Vice President of Investments at InvestTT. She leads the portfolio of foreign direct investments into Trinidad and Tobago at InvestTT, the National Investment Promotion Agency of Trinidad and Tobago with responsibility for attracting, promoting and facilitating foreign and local direct investments.
- Prior to joining InvestTT in 2020, Pramilla spent just over 20 years in Canada working in economic and social development notably entrepreneurship, innovation and higher education in the public sector.
- As an accomplished innovation leader, entrepreneurial executive and educator, Pramilla brings a formidable 20+years of global experience in transforming economic development ecosystems, accelerating market-led innovations and attracting investments from diverse sources to support the growth and scalability of companies including female-led businesses.





## Ms. Jessie-May VENTOUR *(Panel Moderator)*

- A seasoned **Broadcaster and Media Professional**, Jessie-May Ventour has some 30 years experience in the media.
- Many know her as host of several radio and television morning shows over the years, with her most recent stint as host of "The Morning Brew" on CNC3, last year.
- At present, she is part of the news team at Guardian Media Limited, and is broadening her media experience with a foray into cyberspace, working on the online platforms for The Guardian Newspaper and CNC3 Television.
- Apart from the media, Jessie-May also has worked with various government ministries and agencies, and the United Nations, in the corporate communications field.



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