

## Minister wants single private sector organisation



Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism Satyakama 'Kama' Maharaj delivers an address at the Annual International Finance and Accounting Conference (AIFAC-2025), hosted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago at the Hyatt Regency, Port-of-Spain, yesterday. PHOTO BY KERWIN PIERRE

Trade Minister Satyakama Maharaj is calling for a single private sector organisation to be formed to discuss business with the government.

The minister said he has plans to create a Private Sector Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago, as he felt that the private sector was too fragmented in its approach to the Government. He noted he would have to schedule meetings on separate days with various business chambers and organisations.

“We are going to have the private sector speaking with one voice, just like the Inter-Religious Organisation speaks with one voice .

The private sector is going to speak from PSOTT. So one person coming to me, they will sort it out (first) and come to me afterwards. You come to the Minister of Finance afterwards with one voice,” said Maharaj at the Annual International Finance and Accounting Conference (AIFAC-2025), hosted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago (ICATT).

Maharaj also took the opportunity to praise Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar’s role in getting the 15 per cent tariff removed from fertilisers exported from T&T to the US, noting that she took a train to meet US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for crucial talks on the matter.

On November 14, 2025, United States President Trump signed an executive order to reverse his April 2 directive that had imposed a 15 per cent tariff on nitrogen and phosphate fertilisers previously listed under Annex II of Executive Order 14257.

The elimination of the tariff has given T&T the chance to once again benefit from duty-free access for key fertiliser products, including anhydrous ammonia, urea, and UAN.

He said the change was a major boost for the local economy.

“She told them, that you have put us at an unfair advantage. You’re destroying us. Russia is paying zero, Canada is zero, and we have 15 per cent tariff and we are probably your largest supplier. And we are your friends? To that perspective, she was able to persuade the trade department to remove the tariffs on our products,” said Maharaj.