

Chamber: Reassure visitors T&T safe

With the Carnival season and increased cruise ship arrivals on the horizon, the T&T Chamber of Commerce says it is critical to address any potential concerns stemming from the State of Emergency (SoE) regarding the safety and security of visitors.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Chamber said it recognised the need for the government to extend the SoE by three months, but it urged relevant state agencies to work collaboratively to reassure both tourists and investors of the robust measures being implemented to ensure their safety.

“Transparency and proactive communication are essential in fostering confidence and maintaining the positive reputation of T&T as a premier destination for both leisure and business,” it said.

In terms of investor confidence, the Chamber recognised that the SoE may have created some apprehension among potential investors, particularly those who are newer market entrants or more risk-averse.

Noting that while there is a recognition that crime is an ongoing challenge in T&T, the Chamber said some investors have raised concerns about the current security situation, and how this might affect their investment decisions.

“That said, many investors understand that countries around the world face similar challenges, and some have higher crime rates than T&T. Those investors who are more familiar with navigating such environments are more observant of the situation but remain open to opportunities while undertaking their due diligence.

“However, for those newer investors, there has been noticeable hesitation. The TT Chamber has been transparent with these investors, explaining that while the SoE is one of the measures in place to combat crime, it is only part of a broader strategy. We are hopeful that once the objectives of the SoE are achieved in tandem with other strategies, normalcy will return, and confidence in T&T as an investment destination will be restored,” it added.

Further, the Chamber said while some members of the business community acknowledged the positive effects of the SoE in addressing crime, there are still concerns regarding its overall effectiveness, particularly in relation to the scope of police raids and the seizure of firearms, especially semi-automatic weapons, which were initially cited as a key reason for implementing the SoE.

“While we support any measure that can help curb crime and contribute to solving this national problem, crime does not have a single root cause. A more holistic approach is needed to address the complexities of crime, incorporating short, medium, and long-term strategies. This includes addressing the social issues that contribute to criminal activity, as well as the operational environment in which businesses function,” the Chamber advised.

Stating that it is optimistic that, with the right balance of short-term and longterm measures, the government can address both the immediate security concerns and the broader issues impacting the business environment, the Chamber emphasised that stable and secure environment is crucial for sustaining investor interest and maintaining confidence in the country’s growth potential.