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Central Bank statement on current foreign exchange matters

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad. July 4, 2026— The Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (Bank) refers to media reports regarding the ongoing investigation into a quantity of US Dollar (USD) currency that was earmarked to be shipped out of the country.

In light of the ongoing investigations, the Bank needs to exercise care in making any statement at this stage, but recognises that the public has questions about the exporting of US currency. These questions have arisen in the context of domestic demand for foreign exchange outstripping the supply and where legitimate requests for foreign exchange are not always met. The main query raised is whether USD exports are legal. The Bank takes the opportunity to clarify for the public that, from a legal point of view, an authorised dealer under the Exchange Control Act, Chap. 79:50, that is a bank/non-bank licensed under the Financial Institutions Act, 2008, is permitted to export any notes of a class which are, or have at any time been, legal tender in Trinidad and Tobago or in any other country. Exports and imports occur among authorised dealers as part of their operations. With respect to exports of US cash, where a compensating credit in an equivalent amount is wired back to Trinidad and Tobago and the funds sold in the local market, there is no net export of the currency.

This clarification in no way speaks to any the matters that the investigative agencies may be addressing. At this stage, the Central Bank will not make any comment that can potentially compromise the investigations and will continue to cooperate with the relevant agencies in bringing this matter to a conclusion.

With respect to the foreign exchange situation, the Bank has maintained stability in the Official Foreign Exchange Reserve position over the past year notwithstanding injections into the market in the sum of US\$1.2 billion to support the trading book of the authorised dealers. Additional support has also been given to state enterprises and to the Exim Bank for small and medium manufacturers and for essential imports which, collectively, amount to another US\$900 million. Foreign Exchange Reserves at the end of June 2026 remained at 6 months of import cover.

The Bank recognises that there are many areas of the management of the system that need to be strengthened and a number of initiatives will be rolled out in the coming months. This includes updating the Exchange Control Act. The revisions are expected to clarify certain dealings in foreign currency and related matters, including the reporting requirements of the authorised dealers to the Central Bank. This will enhance the supervisory oversight of the foreign exchange system and strengthen the requirements for cross-border cash shipments.

The Bank is committed to championing the legislative and other proposed changes and working closely with the Ministry of Finance and other relevant stakeholders with a view to ensuring that the Act (which is proposed to be renamed the Foreign Exchange Act) reflects provisions that will close a number of existing gaps and strengthen the administration and supervision of authorised dealers. The Governor has noted that these changes are considered necessary in managing some of the foreign exchange issues that the country has been facing and which need to be addressed in the short to medium-term.

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