CENTRAL BANK OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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Central Bank Panel Discussion Explores Opportunities and Risks of Virtual Asset Service Providers

PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. September 14, 2026 – The Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago hosted an engaging panel discussion on **Virtual Asset Service Providers** as part of its Research Review Seminar 2026, providing a forum for stakeholders to examine developments in the rapidly evolving digital asset landscape and their implications for innovation, regulation and financial stability.

The discussion formed part of the Seminar's broader theme, "Operating in a Fractured World: Economic Resilience, Innovation and Sustainability," and brought together representatives from regulatory, industry and international organisations to share perspectives on the opportunities and challenges emerging from the growth of virtual assets and related financial technologies.

The session was moderated by Mr. Demetri Gittens, IT Governance & Risk Assessment Officer at the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago. Panel participants included; Mr. Kester Guy, Chief Executive Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Securities and Exchange Commission; Ms. Kylene Dowden, Director of Legal Services at the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago; Mr. Alexander Gafoor, President of the Fintech Association of Trinidad and Tobago and Mr. Ivo Jenik, Senior Financial Sector Specialist at the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP).

In addressing attendees, Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Larry Howai expressed that “The rapid growth of digital assets, tokenised financial products and emerging payment technologies is transforming how individuals and businesses access financial services and interact with the financial system. These innovations have the potential to increase efficiency, expand financial inclusion and create new avenues for economic growth and entrepreneurship.”

Governor Howai highlighted the agility of Caribbean markets to respond well to these changes and went on to say that “Our region has consistently demonstrated its capacity to adapt to technological change. The challenge before us is to create an environment that encourages innovation while preserving the trust, security and stability upon which our financial systems depend. Achieving this balance requires open, meaningful collaboration among regulators, industry participants, policymakers and researchers. It requires us to understand both the opportunities and the risks associated with emerging technologies and to develop regulatory frameworks that are proportionate, effective and forward-looking.”

Participants explored issues related to consumer protection, financial integrity, innovation, and the development of frameworks that support responsible growth within the digital finance ecosystem. The discussion provided attendees with valuable insights into international developments and emerging considerations for Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean.

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Photo 1: Panel discussion moderated by Mr. Demetri Gittens (left), IT Governance & Risk Assessment Officer at the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago featuring Mr. Kester Guy (centre), Chief Executive Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Securities and Exchange Commission and Ms. Kylene Dowden (right), Director of Legal Services at the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago.

Photo 2: Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Larry Howai.