

**Statement delivered by the Honourable Major General Edmund Dillon,  
Acting Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Republic of  
Trinidad and Tobago in celebration of the 68<sup>th</sup> Republic Day of India  
on Thursday, January 26, 2017**

I am pleased to address you this evening as we join the High Commission of the Republic of India in celebrating the 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Republic Day of India. I do so on behalf of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, and the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

High Commissioner Dey, I take this opportunity to extend to you and your family, a warm welcome to Trinidad and Tobago. I hope your stay thus far has been enjoyable, and I wish you a long and rewarding experience as you represent your beloved country in this part of the globe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let's remind ourselves on January 26, 1950, the Republic of India was born. On that day, the constitution of India was enacted, and one of the world's largest constitutional democracies was created. Since taking responsibility for its own development, India has grown tremendously and, today is a rising power and a fast emerging global leader in innovation, technology, pharmaceuticals, alternative energy, to name just a few.

India's excellence has not only been in areas of work but in play as well, having produced the likes of Sunil Manohar "Sunny" Gavaskar, the greatest opening batsman in cricket history, who incidentally had his test cricket debut at our own Queens Park Oval in 1971. India's first ever win over the West Indies cricket team was also in Trinidad and Tobago, with Gavaskar batting the winning runs. A local calypsonian, Relator, even immortalised the event of the team's winning performance, and I quote a few words: "Gavaskar, the real master, just like a wall, we couldn't out Gavaskar at all, not at all, the West Indies couldn't out Gavaskar at all.

In the same way, ladies and gentlemen, the relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and the Republic of India cannot and will not go out at all. We cannot out this partnership at all. We have an enduring relationship that dates back to our shared colonial heritage, which climaxed with the arrival of Indian indentured labourers to Trinidad and Tobago in 1845. Over the years, the Indo Trinbagonian community has grown and prospered, maintaining their cultural heritage and transforming the socio-economic fabric of our twin island nation with their food, music, dance and religions. One cannot imagine Trinidad and Tobago without Chutney music, a month-long Divali celebration at the Divali Nagar, or a breakfast without doubles and aloe pies, can you?

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Republic of India established formal diplomatic relations since the beginning of this country's sovereignty in 1962. Our relationship has continued to grow and thrive through continued

people-to-people contact, technical cooperation, investment and joint ventures in the business sector. Trinidad and Tobago is grateful to have the opportunity to access the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, which provides training to our nationals in many areas for which India has expertise, including IT, the environment, renewable energy and management.

At the multilateral level, we also share common goals, including the expansion of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to reflect, transparency and democracy and to include developing countries. We both condemn terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations, and endeavour to eliminate this menace through cooperation in the United Nations. We truly believe, as Mahatma Gandhi, God bless his soul, once said, and I quote, “You must not lose faith in humanity; humanity is like an ocean, if a few drops of the ocean become dirty, the ocean does not become dirty”, (unquote). Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to further strengthening our relationship, one, which I have no doubt, will continue to endure for many years to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I invite you to join me in a toast to the Government and People of India in celebration of the 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Republic Day, and to the friendly relations between our nations and people.

I thank you.