

REMARKS DELIVERED BY  
SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DENNIS MOSES, MINISTER OF FOREIGN  
AND CARICOM AFFAIRS ON THE OCCASION OF COLOMBIA'S  
INDEPENDENCE DAY  
THURSDAY JULY 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

I am honoured to extend congratulatory greetings on the auspicious occasion of the 207<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Colombia on behalf of Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister, and the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Your Excellency, as you commemorate your first Independence Day as Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia, allow me once again to welcome you and Mrs. Mejía to our twin-island nation and to wish you every success during your tenure in Trinidad and Tobago.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1968, Trinidad and Tobago and Colombia have enjoyed a warm and cordial relationship which I am confident will be enhanced under your stewardship.

It is worth noting that since the reopening of the Embassy of Colombia in Port of Spain in 2012, there has been increased collaboration between our two countries. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the importance of Colombia's Cooperation Strategy with the Caribbean Basin, in promoting technical

cooperation in the areas of national security and energy security as well as education, in particular, language training.

On this note, I wish to highlight the success of the First Edition of the *Spanish as a Foreign Language Course for Public Servants*, which was offered by the Government of Colombia and concluded in April of this year with thirty-three (33) participants graduating.

I am further pleased to note that the Government of Colombia has undertaken to conduct a Second Edition of this Programme and I am advised that sixty-eight (68) participants from five (5) Ministries are enrolled in this session which began in May and is due to conclude in October, 2017.

Your Excellency, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes that such engagement contributes significantly to building understanding and appreciation of our respective cultures and to strengthening the ties between our nations. With your continued support and partnership, we look forward to further enriching the bilateral relationship in key areas of mutual interest.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, beyond the vibrant bilateral engagement, Trinidad and Tobago and Colombia also collaborate at the multilateral level through our shared membership of a number of regional and hemispheric

bodies such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Pacific Alliance.

With respect to the Pacific Alliance, please allow me to congratulate Colombia on assuming the Pro Tempore Presidency (PTP) of the Pacific Alliance at the 12<sup>th</sup> Pacific Alliance Summit, which took place on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017. As a founding member of the Pacific Alliance, Colombia continues to demonstrate commitment to deepening strategic integration between countries of the Americas and the Pacific including Trinidad and Tobago which is one of the two (2) CARICOM States with observer status in the Alliance.

I must also congratulate the Government and the people of Colombia on the progress made in the implementation of the peace agreement, a milestone achievement in Colombian history, which ended more than fifty (50) years of internal conflict. Trinidad and Tobago noted with interest that last month, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia handed over a second cache of weapons to the United Nations for decommissioning in accordance with the terms of the peace accord. The success of this agreement must be recognized as it is a result of unwavering dedication to restoring peace and security which stands as an example to us all.

Today as a result of these continued efforts, the image of Colombia has been transformed. Moreover, as a result of its strong fiscal policies Colombia's economy has continued to thrive and, after the United States of America, Colombia is Trinidad and Tobago's largest trading partner in the Americas.

Your Excellency, in closing, I am pleased to extend once again sincere congratulations to the Government and people of Colombia on this significant day.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I ask you to raise your glasses in a toast for the continued progress and prosperity of the Government and people of the Republic of Colombia and to the enhancement of the strong ties between our two nations.

Thank you.