

**Statement to be delivered by Senator the Honourable Dennis Moses,  
Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs at the  
High Commission of India's Celebration of the Independence Day  
of the Republic of India -  
Queen's Hall, Tuesday August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.**

On behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I am pleased to offer congratulations to the Government and people of the Republic of India in celebrating the 70th anniversary of Independence of India and extend best wishes for continued prosperity and growth.

Those who led India into Independence undoubtedly had a vision for their country and people. Achieving independence is a significant landmark for a country, for it bestows upon a nation self-determination, democracy, freedom, rights and, significantly, responsibility. Celebration of anniversaries, particularly milestone anniversaries like the 70<sup>th</sup> in this case, is an apt opportunity to reflect on the road travelled thus far as a sovereign state and the way ahead.

Ladies and gentlemen, Trinidad and Tobago and India share a long relationship that predates the achievement of Independence. The true legacy here is our fruitful, friendly and mutually beneficial relations. India supported the Independence of Trinidad and Tobago from British rule and was one of the first countries to formally establish diplomatic relations with

Trinidad and Tobago in 1962. In that same year India upgraded its overseas representation in Trinidad and Tobago to a High Commission and Trinidad and Tobago followed suit in 1969 in New Delhi.

Since then, our relationship has grown in several spheres including technical cooperation, cultural exchange, as well as commercial, 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 in which India has expertise, including information technology, the environment and renewable energy and management. In this regard, the Ministry of Public Administration and Communication is engaging the Indian High Commission to establish an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Centre for Excellence and Innovation under the ITEC Programme. It is envisioned that the Centre would provide ICT training to young people and contribute to job creation and the expansion of business opportunities.

Cooperation also exists in the regional and international fora, through consultation and collaboration with CARICOM and within the Commonwealth of Nations, the G-77 and the United Nations, among others, in areas of

common interest such as United Nations reform, sustainable development, and, most pertinent at this time in the history of the world, counter-terrorism and disarmament.

Independence Day celebrations also compels one to reflect not only on a country's beginning and on its achievements, but also on its place on the global stage and its responsibilities as a sovereign state, mindful of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all countries. Moreover, as developing countries, our common interests and thrust towards socio-economic development and transformation lead us to closer cooperation and partnership. In the midst of the challenges of the 21st century, such effort calls for innovative and creative use of all available resources as well as collaboration with our international partners.

Trinidad and Tobago and India will surely deepen and strengthen their engagement in both the bilateral and multilateral fora, and through direct people-to-people exchanges fed by the enduring link forged by our countries' pre and post-independence experience.

In closing, I extend once again my sincere congratulations to the Government and People of the Republic of India on the celebration of 70 years of Independence.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us renew efforts to aspire and achieve together, both with our fellow citizens and with our global neighbours and partners, for a better tomorrow for all.

Thank you.