

Remarks by Mrs. Jennifer Daniel, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs on behalf of the Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs on the occasion of the 207th Anniversary of the Independence of Chile and Mexico on Thursday 14th September, 2017 at the Residence of the Ambassador of Chile, Maraval

It is indeed an honour to be part of this evening's joint commemoration of the 207th anniversary of the independence of Chile and of Mexico. I would like to extend on behalf of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, and on my own behalf, congratulatory greetings to the Government and people of Chile and to the Government and people of Mexico on this auspicious occasion. While we celebrate, let us not forget the loss of life suffered by those in Mexico, following the recent earthquake last Thursday, and for which we extend our condolences.

A shared birthday of two hundred and seven years is quite an achievement. A joint celebration between a Central American nation and a South American nation is also a true demonstration of the unity and integration which binds these nations. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is also indeed a befitting occasion that the Chilean Ambassador has graciously opened his new home to host this joint celebration.

Your Excellencies, I wish to commend you for your outstanding stewardship in the steps taken to further the bilateral agendas between our respective countries. Without a doubt, the bolstering of our relations could not take place without the impetus of your good selves.

Chile and Mexico have actively engaged Trinidad and Tobago over the years and are our invaluable partners. The relationships between Trinidad and Tobago, Chile and Mexico have been governed by cooperation and reciprocity. It is worth

remarking that the bilateral collaboration amongst our countries continues to be robust and is advancing on a myriad of issues such as education, information communication technology, agriculture, culture, tourism and energy.

Like Mexico, Chile has been very generous in offering training, seminars and workshops to Trinidad and Tobago and CARICOM countries and we will continue to be very grateful.

One of the highlights of this year was the Official Visit of Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago to Chile from 29th – 31st May, 2017. The Official Visit to Chile served to solidify the strong and dynamic relationship between the two countries. It also demonstrated the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to enhancing relations, deepening dialogue and intensifying cooperation with Chile.

Ambassador Schmidt, I am very pleased that Trinidad and Tobago and Chile are currently engaged in exploratory discussions towards a Partial Scope Trade Agreement which will redound to the benefit of both countries. I also look forward to the implementation of the Fútbol Más programme in Trinidad and Tobago, given the positive impact this has had on disadvantaged youth in Chile.

Along with the ongoing technical and economic collaboration, I also note Chile's keen interest in raising cultural awareness. In this context, I particularly look forward to seeing the level of creativity that would be required, for the works of Chilean folklorist Violeta Parra to be interpreted on our national instrument, the steel pan.

Ambassador López, in respect of Mexico, I must highlight the leading role your country continues to play in the international arena. This was demonstrated most recently by the successful hosting of the 47th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States which took place in June, 2017.

Also noteworthy is Mexico's contribution to advancing international security cooperation. Of special significance in this regard, is Mexico's role as host of the 13th Conference of Defence Ministers, succeeding Trinidad and Tobago which hosted the 12th CDMA in 2016. Please allow me also to reiterate Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to working with Mexico in its preparations to host the 13th Conference in 2018.

As headquarters of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Trinidad and Tobago must also acknowledge the tremendous contribution of Mexico to ensuring the financial stability of this important regional mechanism through its increased contributions to the ACS budget.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, beyond the vibrant bilateral engagement, Trinidad and Tobago enjoys meaningful collaboration with both Chile and Mexico at the regional and hemispheric levels. Our shared membership in the Organization of American States (OAS), the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is reflective of the commitment of all of our countries, to the common values of development and integration of Latin America and the Caribbean. As founding members of the Pacific Alliance, the support provided by both your countries for Trinidad and Tobago's bid for observer status in that organisation is also noteworthy.

Your Excellencies, I wish to reiterate the significance which Trinidad and Tobago attaches to its relations with each of your countries. I also wish to assure you that Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to deepening and strengthening its partnerships with both Chile and Mexico in pursuit of our common goals and interests.

It is therefore an honour and a pleasure on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and on my own behalf, to extend best wishes once again to the Government and people of the Republic of Chile and to the Government and people of the United Mexican States on your Independence Day.

Thank you very much.