

**MESSAGE BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 72ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
UNITED NATIONS**

I bring greetings to you on the occasion of United Nations Day, which is celebrated annually on 24th October, and which recognizes the entry into force of the United Nations Charter on 24 October 1945. Seventy-two (72) years on, and with near universal membership of 193 sovereign states, the United Nations stands as a symbol of the global recognition for multilateralism, cooperation, partnership and dialogue as enduring measures for advancing the global pursuit of peace, security and higher quality of life and sustainable development for our generation and those to come.

The path to sustainable development is laden with challenges, which, since the time of the founding of the United Nations, has become more interconnected, insidious and international in nature. Humanity is now faced with a complex web of global events that defy State lines which, if not tackled in a coordinated manner with ambitious intent, stand to threaten our shared humanity and existence. Our community of nations is confronted, for instance, with the issues of terrorism, civil conflict and mass migration; xenophobia and fragmentation; nuclear proliferation; and persistent poverty and growing inequality. I also make special mention of the burgeoning threat posed by unmitigated climate change and global temperature increase which, for small island developing states (SIDS) such as ours and the entire CARICOM region, poses an existential threat that compromises the development of our region.

As we mark the 72nd year of the existence of the United Nations, it is opportune to ponder the contribution the organization has made, and the way forward. The United Nations, which emerged in the wake of World War II, embodies the bastion of statesmanship, diplomatic dialogue and multilateralism in reaching peaceful compromise and advancing sustainable approaches to our global development. It propelled a novel approach to development enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which places the concept of sustainability at its core, and which calls for balanced and mutually reinforced action across 17 broad areas spanning the economic, environmental and social spheres of development. Furthermore, under the leadership of the United Nations, the issue of climate change is integral to the international discourse on development. Thus, in 2015, the international community adopted the Paris Agreement, which symbolizes the commitment to action to stem the unsustainable trajectory of global temperature increase.

The scope and reach of the threats with which we are today endorse that the way forward requires a multilateral response that is rooted in the spirit of cooperation, dialogue, and as far as possible, compromise. It is for this among other reasons that the continued relevance of the United Nations is unquestionable. The UN provides a well-established platform for

dialogue between state and non-state actors. By its very Charter, it recognizes the sovereign equality of states, and in its General Assembly, affords every Member, regardless of size, economy and level of development, an opportunity to engage of matters of national and global interest.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S ROLE AND SOME BENEFITS OF UN MEMBERSHIP

Notwithstanding our small size, Trinidad and Tobago, in demonstration of its commitment to multilateralism, has stood at the vanguard of the development of groundbreaking frameworks under the United Nations System that now contribute to global development. I make special mention of the leadership role that our country demonstrated in framing the establishment and architecture treaties such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) which seeks to regulate the trade of conventional weapons; the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which is dedicated to governance of the oceans and marine resources; the Paris Agreement dedicated to action on climate change championing the special issues which challenge the sustainable development of SIDS; and the resolution, which examines the role of women in the decision-making process relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

The United Nations has also been instrumental in bolstering the resource and technical capacity constraints faced by developing countries and SIDS, and has consistently engaged in facilitating the provision of such resources in the interest of advancing the development of recipient states. Trinidad and Tobago has been the beneficiary of such partnership in the past, and wishes to thank the United Nations for supporting our nation's efforts at people-centered sustainable development. Most recently, in its fervor to ensure that the National Development Plan, Vision 2030, is also in alignment with the overarching 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago hosted a UN MAPS (Monitoring, Acceleration, and Policy Support) Mission in August 2017, to assist in the development of a roadmap for national implementation of the SDGs. In April 2017, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Nations signed the Multi-Country Strategic Development Framework (MSDF), which would facilitate the targeted provision of expertise and experience from the UN in furtherance of this country's achievement of the SDGs.

Trinidad and Tobago engages closely with the United Nations to ensure that the country fulfills its obligations with regard to UN Security Council resolutions such as Resolution 1540, which mandates States to adopt appropriate legislation and domestic controls to prevent the proliferation and illicit trafficking of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

I anticipate that the United Nations would continue to provide a platform through which the voice and interests of underserved and marginalized groups can be heard. The United Nations should be congratulated for its ongoing work in providing life-sustaining aid to populations living in conditions of extreme poverty; advancing the development of women, girls and children; fighting infant and child mortality and curbing the spread of infectious

diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, Ebola and SARS; and also bringing justice to the victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend heartfelt congratulations to the United Nations on its invaluable contribution to global development over the past 72 years! Be assured of the commitment of the Government and the People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in supporting the efforts of this international organization in pursuit of the future we all want: that is, one characterized by sustainable growth and consumption, development, peace, security and contentment for all peoples and nations.

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