

**STATEMENT DELIVERED  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF  
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II  
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND  
NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

The Honourable Acting Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Allan Mendonça and spouse Mrs. Lydia Mendonça,

Your Excellency Tim Stew, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago,

Members of the Cabinet,

Members of Parliament,

Your Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions, other Members of the Diplomatic Corps, and Representatives of International Organisations resident in Trinidad and Tobago,

His Worship Alderman Joel Martinez, Mayor of Port of Spain and Mrs. Marcelle Martinez

Commodore Hayden Pritchard, Chief of Defence Staff

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening.

On behalf of Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; Senator the Honourable Dennis Moses, Minister of

Foreign and CARICOM Affairs; and the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, it is my distinct pleasure to join you this evening to celebrate the 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Her Majesty's birthday was commemorated in the United Kingdom on 21<sup>st</sup> April, one day after the conclusion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> April. Whether by chance or design, I am certain that this year's celebration would have been particularly memorable given that Her Majesty, as Head of the Commonwealth, had just days prior opened her homes in London and Windsor to welcome the members of the Commonwealth, for a highly successful Commonwealth Summit.

Her Majesty's unfailing dedication, duty and service to the peoples of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth over the past 66 years must be acknowledged. These years span innumerable changes and challenges within its Member States and the world, including the advent of modern technology, global awareness of climate change and the scourge of borderless crimes such as terrorism. Through the many trials faced by the Commonwealth membership over the past decades, Her Majesty has remained a symbol of courage and resilience.

Your Excellency, I must commend the Government of the United Kingdom for its hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting last week. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was pleased to participate in fruitful discussions on a shared future with our fellow Commonwealth members. Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago has been happy to count the United Kingdom as a multilateral partner, not only in the Commonwealth but also at the United Nations. As likeminded states, we look forward to working with you and the international community on global issues such as mitigating the effects of climate change and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. I also expect that during your tenure as Chair in Office of the Commonwealth, our countries will continue to collaborate on a multitude of areas including the challenges faced by Small Island Developing States.

The issues facing Small Island Developing States has been of particular importance to our region whose islands have been affected by natural disasters in recent times. The aftereffects of these exogenous shocks have stymied, *inter alia*, the crucial economic growth of the affected countries and the region as a whole. The economic sustainability and stability of the region is a front burner issue and Trinidad and Tobago is

committed to cooperating with our Caribbean neighbours and international partners to see the Caribbean prosper. In this regard, we welcome the discussions between CARIFORUM and the United Kingdom on the nature of its trading relationship post-Brexit. It is heartening to note that both sides have expressed the view that uninterrupted trade relations would be the preferable outcome.

In terms of trade on the bilateral level, Trinidad and Tobago counts the United Kingdom as a key trading partner and we have shared a longstanding collaboration in this respect. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations fifty-six years ago, trade has been one of the cornerstones of our multi-faceted relationship. While our key exports to the United Kingdom have been energy sector based, there is scope for investment in other developing sectors including, agriculture, maritime services, creative industries and tourism. In this regard, I take the opportunity to invite British companies and interested investors to the annual Trade and Investment Conference which will be held in July 2018 and I look forward to the further enhancement of the trade relations between our countries, which would redound to the prosperity of our citizens.

Your Excellency, the dynamic diplomatic relations between our two countries extends far beyond our historic ties. Over the past five decades, we have seen our bonds grow from strength to strength through exchanges in the areas of culture, education, and health. Our collaboration in the area of security has also been fruitful and was enhanced by the MoU regarding a Framework for Security Cooperation, signed between our countries in November 2017.

Yet, the bilateral instruments only partially account for our strong and cordial relations. Indeed, it is the reciprocal movement of our people from one country to the other which have cemented the solid ties between our peoples. In this regard, I am pleased to note that the Right Honourable Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, has set up a specialist task force and helpline to assist those persons from the Windrush Generation, including persons of Trinidad and Tobago heritage, who may need assistance in regularising their status in the United Kingdom.

Your Excellency, I take the opportunity to commend the work undertaken by you and your staff in consolidating the good relations between our two nations. Trinidad and Tobago values its relationship with the United Kingdom

and is optimistic that the firm bonds of friendship and cooperation between our countries will continue to be deeply developed in the future.

In closing, on behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend warmest greetings to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second on the occasion of her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday and best wishes for her continued good health and happiness.