

**STATEMENT BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DENNIS MOSES, MINISTER  
OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD  
AND TOBAGO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE  
NATIONAL DAY OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC**

**SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2018**

Good evening.

It is my pleasure to extend on behalf of Dr. the Honourable Keith Christopher Rowley, Prime Minister, and the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, best wishes to the Government and People of the French Republic as we observe the National Day of France.

On this day in 1789, humanity witnessed the heralding of a new democratic dawn, pioneered by that impassioned *Cri de Cœur* demanding the equality of all men. It was a movement that triggered the tides of democracy across the world, and whose ripples continue to transcend the passage of time.

Your Excellency, the ties between both our countries have long preceded diplomatic formalities. Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago's cultural patrimony has been enriched through cultural contact with French language, architecture and customs. Events such as the Fête de la Musique and Francophonie Week

facilitate contact between our peoples in the areas of music, education, economy, human rights, technology and gastronomy and serve to re-enforce our established historical bonds.

As we celebrate fifty-six (56) years of vibrant diplomatic relations between Trinidad and Tobago and France, I am pleased to note our successful and ongoing collaborations in the areas of health, aviation, water management, construction, security, education and sustainable development. The trademarks of French construction expertise form a fundamental part of local infrastructure, and include the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, the Churchill Roosevelt Highway/Uriah Butler Highway Interchange, and the International Waterfront Complex.

Education has long been a pivotal driving force behind French engagement here in Trinidad and Tobago. The work of the Alliance Française in providing French linguistic and cultural immersion programmes to our citizens is recognized and applauded. The International Language Assistant programme offered by the French Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research benefits educators, aspiring scholars and French language enthusiasts. The ease of access to these and other meaningful cross-border interactions has been

greatly facilitated by the Schengen Visa Waiver Agreement. Signed in 2015, this Agreement is just one of many noteworthy examples of our bilateral cooperation in the global arena. Indeed, Excellency, on the matter of our cultural capital, we are certainly both the richer from these initiatives.

However, despite this cultural *richesse*, we in Trinidad and Tobago are painfully aware of our status as a small island developing state and our inherent vulnerabilities to the ubiquitous threats of natural disasters and climate change. France must be commended for having stood at the vanguard of climate change issues and for having spearheaded the landmark Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Undoubtedly, France has proven to be an invaluable partner in the international arena for small island developing states who struggle to deal with the vagaries of climate change. As we approach COP24, Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to continued cooperation with France in the quest for solutions to a phenomenon that threatens our very existence and livelihood.

Multilateralism, then, is still very much alive and essential for dealing with the challenges that face us all. Trinidad and Tobago joins with France in supporting the work of the United Nations system and in pursuing reforms which will ensure a more equitable, people-centred process that better addresses the

*mélange* of issues on the global agenda. We are particularly mindful of the importance of international security in the face of terrorist attacks across Europe and on French soil. We condemn all such acts of barbarity which seek to deprive humanity of life and liberty, and we stand united with the indomitable spirit of the French people.

Your Excellency,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman,

The great French playwright Molière once remarked that “Every good act is charity. A man’s true wealth hereafter is the good that he does in this world to his fellows.” I daresay that France embodies this true wealth. In fact, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789, which emanated from the French Revolution, set in stone France’s enduring mission to both promote and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all peoples, regardless of our differences.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join with me, then, in raising a toast to the Government and People of the French Republic on the celebration of their National Day and to their continued prosperity and well-being.

I thank you.