

**Speaking Notes for the
Senator the Honourable Dennis Moses, Minister of Foreign and
CARICOM Affairs on the occasion of the Signing Ceremony of the
Basic Cooperation Agreement Between the Government of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the United Nations Children's
Fund (UNICEF)**

Wednesday 29th August 2018

**Level 11, Media Room, Tower C, International Waterfront Centre,
Port of Spain**

Good morning!

I wish to extend a warm welcome to all present to witness the Signing of the Basic Cooperation Agreement (BCA) between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Nearly forty years ago in 1979, the International Year of the Child marked an historic occasion for Trinidad and Tobago and the UNICEF in pledging to promote the welfare of children. This is further demonstrated in our international obligations as States Parties to related multilateral treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children and Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Today's Signing ceremony signals the conclusion of the BCA, which sets out the terms and conditions under which the UNICEF, in the framework of the operational activities of the United Nations, will cooperate with the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in the execution of national programmes, as set out in a Country Programme Action Plan.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago handles the matter of Child Rights using a multi-sectoral approach and the BCA is articulated in a similar manner. For instance, the UNICEF works with several entities through projects such as the 'Unite Against Child Abuse Strategy/Break the Silence' in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) to deal with child abuse, which is of grave concern in Trinidad and Tobago.

I wish to underscore that despite our challenging economic climate, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has embarked on a National Policy Framework for Children, under the ambit of the Framework for Sustainable Development, to promote a process of people-centred development, whereby the promotion and protection of children, is a high

priority within the national development imperatives, that shape the institutions, relationships and norms of Trinidad and Tobago's State and society.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, values the cooperation and support provided by the UNICEF and looks forward to continued collaboration with the UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area as part of the Multi-Country Programme of Cooperation with the other territories in the Eastern Caribbean area. We note that the BCA however, is by no means a panacea and its entry into force will not miraculously cure the problems that it seeks to address. Rather, the onus is upon States Parties as signatories to this Agreement to ensure that its object and purpose is not defeated due to inaction and failing political will.

As we move forward today by signing the BCA, Trinidad and Tobago wishes to re-affirm its commitment to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and partnership with the UNICEF to ensure the safety, security and welfare of the children of our nation.

I would like to thank UNICEF for its continued support and its contribution to the Rights of Children in Trinidad and Tobago. I would also like to thank Dr. Kamuragiye of UNICEF, the respective Ministries, Departments and stakeholders who have collaborated to ensure that this Agreement comes into fruition.

I wish you all the very best.