

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM  
AFFAIRS ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF 58<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC  
OF NIGERIA, MONDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2018**

Your Excellency Jika Ardo Hassan, High Commissioner of  
the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Cabinet colleagues

Your Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Mission and  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

Members of the Media

Good evening

It is my pleasure and honour to extend best wishes to  
the Government and People of the Federal Republic of  
Nigeria on behalf of the Government and People of the  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the 58<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
Independence of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Trinidad and Tobago and Nigeria share historical colonial linkages centuries' old. Significantly, Nigeria was among the first group of countries with which Trinidad and Tobago established formal diplomatic relations upon becoming an independent nation in 1962. Trinidad and Tobago and Nigeria have established diplomatic missions in each other's capitals and recently installed new Heads of Mission in both capitals: His Excellency Jika Ardo Hassan was received earlier this year in Port of Spain and Trinidad and Tobago's High Commissioner to Nigeria, His Excellency Wendell De Landro, presented his Credentials just last month. It is my hope that our friendship continues to deepen under such esteemed stewardship.

As developing countries, our common interests and challenges remain the transformation of the abundance of our resources into the socio-economic benefit for our people. In recent years, our bilateral relationship has been strengthened primarily through technical and cultural exchanges. Towards this end, in May 2018 Trinidad and Tobago successfully hosted a geo-strategic study tour for Nigeria's National Defence College, building on a previous visit in 2014.

In the realm of cultural cooperation in February 2017, Mr. Victor Antai, the Honourable Commissioner for Culture and Tourism of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, visited Trinidad and Tobago to witness our world renowned Carnival celebrations with the view to replicate same in the Akwa Ibom State.

Bilateral agreements provide the foundation for the cooperative endeavours on which our countries engage and help cement the historical, political and social relationship between us. Accordingly, we are currently negotiating a number of agreements.

In addition to government level bilateral cooperation, our people-to-people bonds are cemented by virtue of the overlap of our diaspora. Not only is Trinidad and Tobago part of Africa's diaspora but Trinidad and Tobago has first, second and third generation diaspora living in Nigeria. There also exists a group of professionals working in the hydrocarbon industry in Lagos. In addition, Trinidad and Tobago's indigenous Orisha community maintains spiritual and ancestral linkages to Nigeria. In the education sector, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus and The University of Lagos signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2017 which allows students to enrol and read for a Master's Degree in African and Global

Studies, which is issued by the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies based in both universities.

Your Excellency, as your country turns another page in its history, please be assured of the continued friendship and support of the Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please lift your glasses with me in a toast to the prosperity of the Government and People of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the continued growth of our bilateral relationship.

Thank you.