



Candidate Message

As the largest, most inclusive, most democratic, deliberative body on the planet, bringing together nations in common purpose, to cogitate and collaborate for solutions to the world's most pressing problems, no other international body or forum has the power to shape the future of our civilization than the General Assembly of the United Nations. Faced with a complex array of global challenges far beyond the capacity of any single country, large or small, to resolve unilaterally, the multilateral process ignites that awesome power of the General Assembly. Given that extraordinary potential, we must work creatively to preserve and to further strengthen multilateralism, by re-dedicating ourselves to upholding and defending its centerpiece, the Charter of the United Nations.

Yet in these challenging times characterized by multiple crises that demand coordinated purposive action by all nations, multilateral solutions seem to elude us, whether it is to restore international peace and security; or to regain the lost momentum of progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; or to incentivize bold action to combat climate change and halt the further destruction of the environment; or to bolster efforts to preserve the full enjoyment of human rights and dignity by all.

Clearly, we are at a crossroads in history and the path ahead will be decisive in determining the future; our future, and that of generations to come. In essence, we have two choices. First, we can accept the status quo and with it, the known threats and consequences. Or alternatively, we can share the burden and the responsibility to take the bold decisions and courageous actions that will transform our world by giving life to and delivering on the ambitions and ideals enshrined in our United Nations Charter. This is a compelling agenda for change and for empowerment that demands shared activism. The current paralysis serves no one's interest.

How will we be judged by the next generation if we were to do the easiest thing of all, that is, do nothing and simply stand by as if we are victims of circumstance, despite the fact that collectively we have the power and the tools to act responsibly, to make a quantum difference?

When our children and grandchildren, and their children asks us, what did we do when it mattered most, what would our answer be? Would we be comfortable in ourselves knowing that we failed both them and civilization?

Let us, therefore, recommit to using our collective power and forge ahead, with courage and determination, to do all that we can humanly do to deliver the future we want, for all our People - Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability.

Together, let our answer resonate for generations.



His Excellency Dennis Francis

CANDIDATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FOR
PRESIDENT OF THE 78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

“Peace, Prosperity, Progress, Sustainability”

Biography

Ambassador Dennis Francis has had a career spanning approximately 40 years in the Diplomatic Service of Trinidad and Tobago. For eighteen of those years unbroken, he held the rank of Ambassador until his compulsory retirement from the career service in 2016, according him the distinction of being the longest serving Ambassador of his country. Before demitting office as the Director of Multilateral Relations, he functioned as Senior Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on all multilateral matters including Climate Change and the negotiations for the post 2015 Development Agenda.

His transfer back to Port of Spain in 2011 capped Ambassador Francis' posting as Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva, as well as Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization and to the UN Human Rights Council. He was also accredited concurrently to the U.N. Specialized Agencies in Vienna and Rome, besides having bilateral accreditation as Ambassador to Austria and Italy. Ambassador Francis was also appointed Permanent Delegate to UNESCO.

In 2010 at a period of renewed engagement in Multilateral Trade Negotiations, Ambassador Francis was elected to the sensitive Chairmanship of the Negotiating Group on Rules of the WTO, namely Anti-Dumping, Subsidies and Countervailing Duties and Fisheries Subsidies. He also served as Chairman of the Committee on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights in Regular Session as well as Chairman of the Commonwealth Group of Developing Countries (2007/8).

He has led many national delegations including to the First Universal Periodic Review of Trinidad and Tobago in the UN Human Rights Council in October 2011 and to UNCTAD 10, which was held in Accra, Ghana in 2008.

Ambassador Francis' assignment in Geneva in 2006 followed a seven-year tour of duty as High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago to Jamaica and Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority. During this period, Ambassador Francis was also accredited as Ambassador (non-resident) to the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba. When he demitted office in Jamaica, he had held the position of Dean of the Diplomatic Corps for almost two years. Ambassador Francis took an active interest in the issues before the International Seabed Authority, leading to his election to the Chairmanship of the Assembly in 2003.

In July of 2021, he completed a three-year assignment as Chairman of the Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO.

Ambassador Francis co-facilitated a training course entitled "Protocol and Diplomacy: A Guide for the Modern Professional," at the Diplomatic Academy of the Caribbean; an institution in the conceptualization of which he was intimately involved as Lead Technical Adviser to the Foreign Minister. In 2018, Ambassador Francis also co-authored a book entitled "Heads of Mission-A Handbook," which has received regional and international acclaim. In 2020, Ambassador Francis returned to The University of the West Indies, his alma mater, as Visiting Scholar at the Institute of International Relations at St. Augustine. He is also a graduate of The School of Advanced International Studies, the Johns Hopkins University in Washington DC. (1985).

Ambassador Francis is married to his best friend, Joy Thomas-Francis and they have three adult sons.

Peace

The international community faces many complex challenges with respect to the maintenance of peace and security. The emergence and proliferation of hybrid conflicts have exacerbated an already fragile global environment where there exists a significant trust deficit and diminishing good faith among various stakeholders. This foreboding state of play not only poses threats to our collective peace and security but also an existential threat to all of humanity. To confront these challenges, our responses must be grounded in multilateralism rather than in unilateral actions. In looking to the future towards Agenda 2030, I am of the considered view that our aspirations must be grounded on being people centered.

Prosperity

We must ensure that a people-centred approach is adopted in the fulfillment of our duty, in order to guarantee a prosperous future with respect for human rights, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination. We must continue to challenge ourselves to address the inequalities that exist through the fostering of economies that are productive, dynamic, innovative and sustainable, taking into account our needs and capacities as well as the varying levels of national development. I am therefore convinced that we must work together to create a sustainable and inclusive environment that promotes shared prosperity and enables the opportunity for all to reach their fullest potential.

Progress

Current global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, more frequent and intense natural disasters, spiralling conflict, violent extremism, forced displacement of people and other crises continue to impede our ambitions towards sustainable development. It is empirical that a pragmatic framework building on current strategies and processes be undertaken reflecting emerging issues and priorities, as we strive to rebuild and get back on track in this Decade of Action. I acknowledge that our actions must be transformational, meaningful and equitable to accelerate progress across all Goals and Targets and ensure no one is left behind.

Sustainability

The triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss must be resolved if we are to have a viable future on our planet. To deal with the crises we face and reverse today's alarmingly dangerous trends, it cannot be business as usual. Our actions today will shape the world we live in and the planet we will inhabit for present and future generations. The current situation demands that our international community demonstrates collective and urgent action that will have a transformative impact. The General Assembly has a key role to play in protecting our global commons by boosting global efforts towards greater climate action, restoring ecosystems, protecting the oceans, and combatting desertification.