



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **MEETING BETWEEN SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DR. AMERY BROWNE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS, AND HIS EXCELLENCY DIDIER CHABERT, AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

#### **PORT OF SPAIN: 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2022**

On 18 February 2022, a Meeting was held between Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, and His Excellency Didier Chabert, Ambassador of the French Republic to Trinidad and Tobago.

Minister Browne took the opportunity to extend congratulations and best wishes to France on its assumption of the Presidency of the European Union (EU) and its strategic direction for the regional institution. Ambassador Chabert informed Minister Browne that in light of the Ukraine crisis, the priorities for the EU Presidency had shifted. However, he stressed that the Caribbean remains a key focus of France and they would continue to advocate for greater emphasis on the region by the European Union.

To stress this regional position, the Ambassador acknowledged France's role as an Associate Member by virtue of Martinique's and Guadeloupe's presence in the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). He then took the opportunity to call for Martinique and Guadeloupe to be accorded similar status in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Minister Browne and Ambassador Chabert mutually acknowledged the strong partnership between Trinidad and Tobago and France, which has been fostered by technical cooperation agreements and collaboration in agriculture, education, energy, health, security and trade.

The Minister and the Ambassador explored the issue of shared security interests including the trafficking in narcotics, arms and persons. Both parties underscored the importance of close collaboration and the sharing of information and best practices in this area. Minister Browne advanced that training by the French Naval Forces would be of significant benefit to the Defence Force of Trinidad and Tobago.

In the field of agriculture, the Minister and the Ambassador alluded to the comparative advantage of Trinidad and Tobago with respect to the cocoa process, with the Ambassador commending the launch of a 'Trinitario Cocoa Webinar Series 2022', a joint effort between Trinidad and Tobago and the European Union, the preceding day.

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Energy was also identified as an area for enhanced cooperation. France enjoys a leadership role in the area of green hydrogen and Minister Browne proposed the possibility of Trinidad and Tobago learning from French advancements in this area, as this country seeks to diversify its economy and divert from its traditional focus on oil and gas.

The valuable contribution of the Alliance Française in the dissemination of the French language in the country was commended by both parties. Ambassador Chabert advanced that consideration could be given to an extension of the Institute in Tobago to facilitate the provision of French language training to persons in the hospitality sector, which would augur well for the tourist sector.

The issue of the Blacklisting by the European Union of Trinidad and Tobago as a Non-Cooperative Jurisdiction for Tax Purposes was also raised and the Minister emphasised that significant legislative progress had been made by this county to be in full compliance in the area of money-laundering and counter-terrorism. He further conveyed the hope of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for a quick resolution of the matter.

The meeting concluded with a commitment that both parties would work together to further strengthen the ties between Trinidad and Tobago and France.



Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs meets with His Excellency Didier Chabert, Ambassador of the French Republic to Trinidad and Tobago on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 at the Ministry's headquarters. Officials of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and the Embassy of the French Republic were also in attendance.