



MEDIA RELEASE

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS MEETS MINORITY LEADER AND OTHER CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS OF US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TT DIASPORA LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ON MARCH 08, 2023

PORT OF SPAIN: 9TH MARCH, 2023

Meeting with House Minority Leader - Congressman Hakeem Jeffries

Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago met with the Honourable Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives on March 08, 2023 at the United States Capitol Building. Her Excellency Candace A. Bond also attended the meeting.

Minister Browne and Congressman Jeffries exchanged many shared views on matters of mutual interest for Trinidad and Tobago and the United States including migration, violent crime, terrorism, and the situation in Haiti, and explored opportunities for cooperation that will further strengthen bilateral relations at both the national and regional levels.

Minister Browne also expressed appreciation to Congressman Jeffries for his advocacy and advancement of the key interests of Trinidad and Tobago in his previous roles, particularly as the whip of the influential Congressional Black Caucus, and acknowledged his decade of representation of many members of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora as the US representative for New York's 8th Congressional District.

Meeting with Congressional Caribbean Caucus Co-Chair – Congresswoman Stacy Plaskett

Minister Browne also met Congresswoman Stacy Plaskett US representative for the US Virgin Islands (USVI), and expressed the gratitude of the People and Government of Trinidad and Tobago for her strong advocacy in recent times including on financial services, and as a member of the Subcommittee on Trade of the House Committee on Ways and Means of the 117th Congress, on behalf of our country's key enduring national economic interests. Congresswoman Plaskett also emphasized the important leadership role played by the US Vice President.

Minister Browne and Congresswoman Plaskett advanced similar views on several other shared priorities such as the spread of violent crime in the CARICOM region, the situation in Haiti, and the ongoing challenges of preserving correspondent banking relations. Minister Browne took the opportunity to highlight the importance of the upcoming CARICOM Symposium on Crime as a Public Health Concern to be hosted by Trinidad and Tobago.

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Meeting with Chair of Congressional Black Caucus – Congressman Steven Horsford

In his final meeting with members of the US Congress, Minister Browne met with Congressman Steven Horsford (D-NV 4th District), the current and 28th Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and whose mother is from Trinidad and Tobago. Minister Browne expressed the gratitude of Trinidad and Tobago for the Congressman's advocacy on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly for vaccine acquisition and for promoting the mutual benefits of the mature and enduring shared interests of Trinidad and Tobago and the United States.

Minister Browne and Congressman Horsford discussed the violent crime, migration and correspondent banking challenges facing Trinidad and Tobago and the wider CARICOM region, with Minister Browne reminding that the United States is a source of illegal firearms in the region. Given the Congressman's impressive leadership record in workforce development in the hospitality industry in Nevada, and Trinidad and Tobago's focus on economic diversification, Minister Browne highlighted the opportunity for and invited Congressman Horsford to collaborate toward achieving similar results in strengthening the Trinidad and Tobago tourism brands.

Agreeing that there is also a region-wide opportunity for CARICOM to benefit from workforce development, and reiterating the importance of renewable energy transition, Congressman Horsford expressed interest in visiting Trinidad and Tobago, possibly with a Congressional Delegation in the near future.

Conversation with Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora Leaders and Influencers

To conclude his intense two day visit, Minister Browne met with more than sixty leaders and influencers in the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora across the US, including from the California (Los Angeles), Florida (Miami), the New York-New Jersey area, Massachusetts (Boston), Texas (Massachusetts), and the Washington, DC-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) area. During the hybrid meeting, with in-person attendees assembled at the Embassy in Washington, DC. Minister Browne saluted the deep commitment and readiness to contribute to the development of Trinidad and Tobago expressed by all of the diaspora leaders and influencers, and outlined the importance and timeliness of the current diaspora engagement strategic measures being instituted and led by the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, including the establishment of a Diaspora Affairs Unit, and the current advancement of a Draft National Diaspora Policy, which he urged is still open for comments and inputs from the diaspora.

Minister Browne assured the diaspora leaders and influencers of his full appreciation of the immense value of their contributions and their expertise and experience, and reiterated his intent to immediately follow up on the many suggestions and recommendations that they shared during the conversation with him. Minister Browne also encouraged the diaspora leaders and influencers to stay connected both among themselves, and with the Trinidad and Tobago Diplomatic and Consular

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Missions and representatives across the US and the globe, to ensure that the potential for their increased involvement in the development of Trinidad and Tobago is realized.

Minister Browne also extended International Women's Day Greetings to the Women in attendance and in the Diaspora, and gave recognition to the important role of women in the sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago.

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