

**Remarks for delivery at the Commonwealth Day Reception,
March 09, 2026 at
the British High Commissioner's Residence
in Maraval, Port of Spain**

Good afternoon...

I am honoured to join you this evening as we commemorate Commonwealth Day 2026. I bring greetings on behalf of the Honourable Sean Sobers, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, who is unable to be present due to prior official commitments. He has asked that I convey his sincere appreciation to His Excellency and the British High Commission for convening this meaningful observance.

This year's theme "**Unlocking opportunities for a prosperous Commonwealth**" speaks to principled engagement, multilateralism, economic diplomacy and sustainable development, all of which are entrenched in the foreign policy of Trinidad and Tobago.

For a small island developing state such as ours, unlocking opportunities has sometimes been an elusive pursuit. However, our history and geography have taught us that opportunities expand through cooperation; that resilience

is strengthened through partnership; and that influence is amplified when exercised collectively.

A prosperous Commonwealth is therefore a critical objective which can be achieved through our continuous external engagement. Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to multilateral cooperation, as a pathway to development, is evident in our active participation within the Commonwealth, where we consistently advocate for the interests of small states, climate-vulnerable countries, and developing economies.

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago can also boast of the benefits gained through the Commonwealth. Some of the more recent cooperative initiatives include the Senior Leadership and Management Training Seminar conducted in collaboration with our Integrity Commission, the ongoing Commonwealth Election Professionals (CEP) Training, which continues to enhance the competence of our professionals and the Commonwealth Election Observer Missions, which recently provided support at our Parliamentary Elections.

As we look ahead to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2026 in Antigua and Barbuda, with its emphasis on accelerating partnerships and investment for a prosperous Commonwealth, we are reminded that

prosperity must be inclusive, innovative and sustainable. It must empower our youth, advance gender equality, promote entrepreneurship, and facilitate meaningful participation in the global economy.

The theme also compels us to invest in people. Across the Commonwealth, women and young people are driving innovation in climate action, technology, creative industries and social enterprise. Their leadership is not incidental, it is indispensable. Ensuring that their voices are central to policy, partnership and progress is fundamental if we are to truly achieve sustainable prosperity.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the Commonwealth remains a distinctive and dynamic network. It brings together developed and developing countries, large and small states, bound not merely by history but by a shared determination to convert dialogue into tangible outcomes. Its value lies in its flexibility, its accessibility, and its ability to respond to the evolving needs of its members.

For Trinidad and Tobago, engagement within the Commonwealth complements our broader commitment to regional integration through CARICOM, strengthened South-South cooperation, and constructive North-

South dialogue. These interconnected partnerships reinforce that sustainable advancement in today's world is built through collaboration.

On that promising note, we also recognise the contribution to this evening displays by the Gender Affairs Division of the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services, whose officers assigned are ably managing the booth on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago at this Reception.

So, as we commemorate Commonwealth Day 2026, let us recommit to deepening partnerships that generate real investment, expand trade, advance climate resilience, and unlock opportunities for the next generation. Let us ensure that our collective efforts are **practical, people-centred and forward-looking.**

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend best wishes to all Commonwealth Member States.

May our shared efforts continue to strengthen our resilience, broaden our opportunities, and secure a prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come.

Thank you.