



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS ADVANCES COUNTRY'S APPLICATION FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP IN MERCOSUR**

**PORT OF SPAIN: 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2026**

Foreign and CARICOM Affairs Minister, Honourable Sean Sobers, has advanced this country's foreign policy goal of pursuing a new Commercial Trade Partnership between Trinidad and Tobago and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). Trinidad and Tobago is seeking to become an Associate Member of MERCOSUR as well as negotiate a Partial Scope Trade Agreement with MERCOSUR.

Minister Sobers is in Paraguay on an invitation issued by His Excellency Santiago Peña Palacios, President of the Republic of Paraguay, to the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar S.C., Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to attend the Summit of Heads of State of MERCOSUR and Associated States in Asuncion, Paraguay.

During the visit to Paraguay, Minister Sobers held separate bilateral meetings with His Excellency Rubén Darío Ramírez Lezcano, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Paraguay; His Excellency Mauro Vieira, Minister of External Relations of The Federative Republic Of Brazil; His Excellency Pablo Quirno Magrane, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Argentine Republic; and His Excellency Mario Lubetkin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of The Oriental Republic Of Uruguay. Arising out of these discussions, it was agreed that Trinidad and Tobago's application for Associate Membership would proceed to the next stage and would, *inter alia*, include the negotiation of trade agreements with the core members of MERCOSUR.

Minister Sobers was also invited to address the Summit. In his address delivered in Spanish, Minister Sobers indicated that as Trinidad and Tobago continues to transform its economy through diversification and innovation, it recognises that the time is right to elevate the country's relationship with partners in South America who share a commitment to shared prosperity and regional development.

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- 2 -

MERCOSUR is a regional integration process, initially established by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and subsequently joined by Venezuela and Bolivia. The Associated States of MERCOSUR are Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama, Peru and Suriname.

MERCOSUR Members encompass approximately 308 million persons with a combined gross domestic product of approximately US\$3.0 trillion. A Partial Scope Trade Agreement with MERCOSUR will open new market access opportunities for the local manufacturing sector, as Trinidad and Tobago has a significant manufacturing base with several internationally competitive products which can succeed in South America. In addition, MERCOSUR offers a potential export market and an attractive source of investment and technology for Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to trade in goods, an agreement with MERCOSUR can provide a platform for increased trade in services, particularly tourism, cultural, financial, and ICT services, as well as for the promotion of investment.

Minister Sobers was accompanied by Mr Randall Karim, Permanent Secretary and Head of the Foreign Service and Ms Akilah Seale, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Embassy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the Republic of Panama.

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