

**Remarks Delivered by The Honourable Sean Sobers, Minister Of Foreign And
CARICOM Affairs On The Occasion Of The 216th Anniversary Of The
Independence Of The Republic Of Colombia,
Monday July 20, 2026,
6:00 P.M. To 8:00 P.M, Queen's Hall**

Your Excellency Mr. William Bush Howard, Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia to Trinidad and Tobago and Mrs. Bush;

Cabinet Ministers in the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago;

Your Excellency Álvaro Sánchez Cordero, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps;

Your Excellencies, Heads of Missions, and other Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Staff of the Embassy of Colombia and Nationals of Colombia resident in Trinidad and Tobago;

Other Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen, ¡Buenas tardes a todos!

At what is my first attendance at this auspicious National Day celebration, in my capacity as Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, allow me to express, on behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and, on my own behalf, congratulatory greetings on the 216th anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Colombia.

Before I proceed, on behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I would also like to congratulate the President-elect of the Republic of Colombia, Mr. Abelardo de la Espriella, for his victory in the second round of elections in June 2026 and, in this regard, we look forward to continued engagement with the Republic of Colombia in further strengthening our relationship for the mutual benefit of our peoples.

July 20th commemorates the revolutionary 'Cry of Independence' of 1810 when residents initiated protests against colonial rule, which sparked the pivotal decade-long struggle for sovereignty.

For us in the Caribbean, we view that struggle as one of the matches which lit a torch of inspiration, ushering in similar movements across Latin America. This evening, we acknowledge the Republic of Colombia not just as the first Spanish colony in South America to declare independence, but as the third-oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere.

An occasion such as this, is an opportunity to reflect on these challenging and meaningful years and allows us to honour the legacy of your nation's great heritage. From the vibrant colours of Cartagena; to the timeless charm of Bogotá; the vibrancy of the lush Amazon rainforest to the towering Andes, Colombia is a symphony composed by nature itself.

I am awed and I thank you for the opportunity to visually enjoy a glimpse of the rich culture and exceptional traditions that Colombia has to offer.

This evening's celebration is two-fold, as we are also commemorating 58 years of established diplomatic relations between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Republic of Colombia.

Excellency, as you know, Trinidad and Tobago and Colombia had long enjoyed a linkage of people and history prior to the formal establishment of diplomatic relations in 1968; and further to the formalisation of our relationship, there is no doubt, our nations continue to enjoy a productive and cordial affiliation which has been enhanced under your stewardship buoyed by the efforts of the staff of the Colombian Embassy.

I wish to inform you all that Colombia has repeatedly expressed a willingness and eagerness to share expertise in services, knowledge, trade, technical cooperation and culture as exhibited in the third round of CARICOM-Colombia negotiations in December 2025 to upgrade the Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement. Further, this comity has served as the basis for deeper cooperation and collaboration.

Cabe destacar en español, que los idiomas desempeñan un papel esencial en la diplomacia.

Indeed, language is inextricably interwoven with history and culture and in the vein of services rendered and technical cooperation, Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to the next edition of the Spanish language within the corpus of the Foreign Language (EFL) Programme, to be provided by the Government of Colombia to diplomats and public officials of Trinidad and Tobago.

This is one of the most effective programmes on the cooperation agenda, as it is a direct link to the immediate and useful application to education, employment and communication and one that has allowed both countries to access the necessary tools to bridge cultures, break down barriers and encourage learning.

Of course, I cannot move forward without talking about football. I take this moment to convey on behalf of the People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and myself, heartfelt commendations to your country and its National Football team fondly nicknamed “Los Cafeteros,” on its memorable performance in the FIFA World Cup in 2026.

It was especially heart-warming to witness both of our nationals come together to support our regional brothers in their journey to the trophy. The passion, dedication and vigour exhibited by your national team served as a shining example of the heart and soul of Colombia. ¡Viva Colombia!

At the end of it, Colombia is a nation of hope, and the story of a people who have transformed adversity into strength, and whose rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and dreams continues to inspire the world, for this reason, Excellency, I wish to assure you of Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to strengthening this enduring alliance and multifaceted bilateral partnership.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, at this juncture, I invite you all to please join me as I raise a toast to the Government and People of Colombia on the celebration of this 216th National Day.

¡Feliz día de la Independencia!
¡Salud!