WELCOME REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE SEAN SOBERS M.P., MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS FOR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS' SECOND ANNUAL DIVALI CELEBRATION "DIVALI WITH THE DIPLOMATS"

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS

THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER, 2026

Ladies and gentlemen.

Shubh Divali, and a very pleasant evening to all.

It is an honour to welcome the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister, S.C. M.P., Cabinet colleagues, the Dean and members of the Diplomatic Corps, the business community and dedicated staff of the Ministry to the Second Annual Divali Celebration of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs.

Your presence this evening reflects the spirit that lies at the heart of Divali: the coming together of people in fellowship, hope and mutual respect.

This **Divali with the Diplomats** celebration holds particular significance for us here at the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs. As the institution entrusted with representing the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago internationally, the Ministry has

a responsibility not only to advance our national interests but also to share our story with the world.

For you, the members of the Diplomatic Corps, this evening offers another opportunity to experience the richness of our nation's cultural heritage. Your participation also underscores the enduring value of cultural diplomacy. Through such occasions, we deepen mutual understanding, nurture friendships and strengthen the bonds that connect nations and peoples.

I wish to recognise the members of staff of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs. I extend my sincere appreciation for your continued professionalism, dedication and service. Through your efforts at headquarters and at our missions abroad, you advance the interests of Trinidad and Tobago and help maintain our country's respected presence within the international community.

I also commend the team, led by PS Karim, responsible for organising this evening's celebration. PS Karim was the choreographer and event planner to this evening's activities. Through all your creativity and commitment, you have given us the opportunity to pause, connect with one another, and appreciate the traditions that continue to strengthen our national community.

As we enjoy this evening's celebration, let us also reflect on its enduring message. Each of us has the capacity to bring light to our families, our workplaces, our country and the wider world.

May the illumination of the deyas inspire wisdom in our decisions, kindness in our interactions, and courage in the face of adversity. May their light also renew our commitment to unity, peace, and service, both within Trinidad and Tobago and throughout the world.

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, I extend warm Divali greetings to the Hindu community and to all who are celebrating, both at home and around the world.

May this sacred festival bring peace to your homes, prosperity to your endeavours, and renewed hope to your hearts.

Shubh Divali.