Statement delivered by Ms Candice Shade Permanent Secretary (Ag.) of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs on the occasion of the Day of the Dead celebrations of the United Mexican States on Monday, November 02, 2026

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Buenas Noches.

It is my pleasure to be with you here on behalf of the Honourable Sean Sobers who is currently on official travel duty.

As sorrow and joy come together in a vibrant day of remembrance, it is a distinct honour to have been invited to join you today and to deliver remarks, in commemoration of the meaningful and cultural celebration, known as Día de los Muertos.

Recognised and inscribed in 2008 on *UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* due to its deep cultural and spiritual significance for Mexico's indigenous communities, these celebrations pay personal tribute to the lives, memories and enduring legacies of those who have passed. Further to this, this holiday reminds us that remembrance is not merely an act of looking back, it is also an expression of gratitude for the love, wisdom and traditions entrusted to us by previous generations. It is more than a commemoration of those who have departed, it is a celebration of life itself.

Ambassador,

For countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, where cultural diversity forms an integral part of our national identity, celebrations such as these provide an important platform for cultural diplomacy. They allow us to deepen our understanding of one another, strengthen people-to-people connections and foster greater friendship and cooperation between our nations.

This observance reflects a profound appreciation for family, heritage and the enduring bonds that connect the past and the present. In this vein, as I am seeing the vibrant displays here this evening, I understand that through colourful marigolds, candles, music, traditional cuisine and cherished photographs, families honour the departed, celebrating not only the lives they lived but also the lasting influence they continue to have on those who remain.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this vein it would be remiss of me to neglect to mention and recognise the efforts made today, and we thank you, to pay tribute to the Calypso King of the World Dr. Slinger “The Mighty Sparrow” Francisco. Her Excellency Christine Carla Kangaloo O.R.T.T., President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, said it best that “we have lost not merely a great calypsonian, but one of the great interpreters of Caribbean life.”

As you all are aware, Trinidad and Tobago loved their Sparrow, and whilst he is flying high, he too knew that death was a part of life, as one of his greatest hits was “Sparrow Dead.”

Your Excellency,

We must recognise that this renowned celebration unites the traditions of Mexico's Indigenous/First Peoples with European religious practices and, in some cases, the African experience, to honour our departed love ones in a shared space. Particularly remarkable, is that beyond its significance to Mexico, this celebration provides an opportunity for the international community to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity and the importance of preserving traditions that define our collective identities.

What makes this tradition particularly meaningful is its message that death, while an inevitable part of the human experience, does not diminish

the bonds of affection that unite us. It speaks to the universal human experience of loss while offering a beautiful reminder to cherish the present moment.

In closing Excellency, I extend my sincere appreciation to the organisers and all those who have contributed to making this celebration possible.

May this day serve as inspiration for us to celebrate the cycle of life and build a future in which cultural traditions continue to unite rather than divide us, celebrating our shared humanity and building bridges of understanding between our peoples.

Muchas gracias,

Thank you, and may Mexico's rich cultural heritage continue to shine brightly for generations to come.