

**STATEMENT BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DENNIS MOSES,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS, AT THE SIGNING  
CEREMONY FOR THE *FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF A CONCESSIONAL LOAN FOR  
THE ACQUISITION OF A MULTI-PURPOSE PATROL VESSEL FROM  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA***

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS, AUGUST 9, 2017**

Good morning.

Thank you all for attending today's Signing Ceremony to witness the formal acceptance by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago of a concessional loan from the Government of the People's Republic of China to facilitate the acquisition of a Multi-Purpose Patrol Vessel.

Before we proceed, I should like to extend condolences to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China on the loss of life and the destruction caused by the earthquake which struck Sichuan Province last night. Our prayers and thoughts are with the families of the victims, including those who have been injured. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago pledges its solidarity with and support for the people of the People's Republic of China during this challenging time.

Distinguished guests, it is with great pleasure that I address you as our countries take this much-anticipated step to conclude the Framework Agreement which will join over sixty other agreements concluded between Trinidad and Tobago and China during our many years of cooperation. Such cooperation has yielded mutually beneficial tangible results, which have the potential for contributing to the development and well-being of our peoples well into the future.

Far from being mere works of prose, these agreements between Trinidad and Tobago and China have enabled us to advance in several sectors, including partnership on major construction projects such as the National Sporting Facilities, the Couva Hospital and Training Facility and the National Academy for the Performing Arts, both in the north and south of our country. Other bilateral arrangements have allowed for the provision of grant funding, the formal establishment of working relationships between agencies in both countries and linkages in areas of common interest.

Agreements, as well as the historical, political and social relationship between our countries, provide the foundation for the wide range of cooperative initiatives in which Trinidad and Tobago and China engage. In the area of security, our activities have included the outfitting of the National Operations Centre of Trinidad and Tobago, the provision of military aid, and training and development. Further, in an effort to assist in advancing initiatives between our military establishments, Trinidad and Tobago included the position of Military Attaché at our Embassy in Beijing.

These accomplishments notwithstanding, the acquisition of the Multi-Purpose Patrol Vessel for use by the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, the first transaction of its kind between our countries, created a new chapter in our security cooperation. And at this juncture, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Ambassador Song towards consolidating further the relations between Trinidad and Tobago, in particular through the realisation of the Framework Agreement we are about to sign.

In addition to the obvious outcome of the finalisation of this agreement through signature, today's Signing Ceremony emphasises the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to advancing its relationship with the Government of the People's Republic of China. Indeed, the Trinidad and Tobago Government has been working assiduously toward this end, resolving outstanding issues and developing alliances in other fields of interest. In the latter regard, two (2) members of Cabinet have visited China thus far to further discussions on sport, financial services and forensic science, among other areas.

I wish to thank the Government of the People's Republic of China for continuing to work with the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago towards the realisation of our development goals, in particular for its offer of concessional resources to acquire the Multi-Purpose Patrol Vessel. I also express appreciation to Ambassador Song and my Cabinet colleagues whose special effort and diligence ensured the conclusion of this agreement at this time.

Your Excellency, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, getting to this day may have seemed like a protracted process, but I believe the words of a popular calypso ring true: "Even though the road was long, no matter what come, we knew we would make it."

I thank you.