

**Remarks delivered by  
Senator the Honourable Dennis Moses,  
Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs,  
at the Reception in Celebration of the National Day of the  
Republic of Cuba – February 02, 2018**

Good evening to you all.

It is indeed an honour and a pleasure to extend, on behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and on my own behalf, warmest greetings to the Government and People of the Republic of Cuba as we gather to celebrate the Fifty-ninth Anniversary of that historic event, “*El Triunfo de la Revolución,*” which took place on January 01, 1959.

On this special occasion, I wish to commend our Cuban friends on their significant accomplishments in culture, education, health, science and sports. I also wish to further commend the Government of Cuba on its determination to explore new ideas and implement new economic strategies, which aim at giving every Cuban a stake in national development, as well as the opportunity to contribute fully to and to share equally in the creation of a better Cuba.

Like all relationships, the bonds of friendship established on December 08, 1972 between Cuba and Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have evolved, and surely will continue to do so well into the future. Over the years, the Trinidad and Tobago-Cuba bilateral relationship has deepened and widened, and has been nurtured by the joint pursuit of our common goals.

Trinidad and Tobago views Cuba as a valued partner and our partnership is characterised by mutual respect and sustained cooperation in diverse areas namely, health, sport, education, disaster risk reduction, culture and agriculture. Notably, we are working on embarking on another dimension of our relationship by pursuing collaboration in the area of tourism.

In the economic sphere, Trinidad and Tobago enjoys a vibrant commercial relationship with Cuba, and I am pleased to say that there are increasing opportunities for trade, as a result of the signing of the Second Protocol to the CARICOM-Cuba Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (TECA) in November 2017. It is

expected that expanded duty free access to a greater range of items will no doubt redound to the benefit of all our peoples.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Another noteworthy achievement was the recent launch by Caribbean Airlines (CAL) of its twice-weekly, direct service from Port of Spain to Havana. These flights could boost the close cultural, economic and social ties between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba. Moreover, the prospect of seamless connections to and from other regional destinations heralds the possibility of a more integrated Caribbean.

The Trinidad and Tobago–Cuba bilateral relationship has blossomed into a regional partnership. The decision in 2002 to observe December 08 of every year as CARICOM-Cuba Day attests to our commitment to consolidate and expand our relationship.

Cuba has provided technical support to CARICOM States in such areas as education, health and sports. Many CARICOM nationals have benefitted from scholarships tenable in Cuba and

many others have been recipients of health care provided by Cuban medical personnel. It will also be remiss of me, if I failed to mention Cuba's acts of generosity and goodwill to those CARICOM States that were adversely impacted by the extreme climate events during the 2017 hurricane season.

At the Sixth CARICOM-Cuba Summit held in Antigua and Barbuda in December 2017, our Leaders recognised that as developing countries facing a variety of challenges, opportunities for closer collaboration must be pursued. In this regard, it was agreed that both Sides would engage in stronger cooperation in disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, tourism, science and technology.

We have also been working with Cuba within the framework of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in seeking to treat with issues related to the Greater Caribbean Region. At the international level, CARICOM Leaders have consistently reiterated our support for the sovereignty of Cuba in accordance with the principles enshrined in the United Nations' Charter.

Cuba's integral role in the arc of islands called the Caribbean, lies at the core of the decision by the leaders of Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1972. This acknowledgement of Cuba as a member of the Caribbean family led to the opening of our doors to our Cuban friends. Through these open doors, we have welcomed each other and benefitted from the myriad opportunities available. Given the dynamism in our relationship, we eagerly await the generation of more opportunities with which we are prepared to fully engage.

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As we reflect on this Fifty-ninth Anniversary of "*El Triunfo de la Revolución*", I wish to take this opportunity to re-affirm the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the strengthening of our ties with the Republic of Cuba, in diverse spheres. Indeed, we look forward to providing mutual support to one another as we proceed with our bilateral and regional objectives.

In closing, I wish to pay tribute to the Cuban spirit of generosity which has magnified the influence of Cuba beyond its geographical space. This generosity has been demonstrated in the provision of medical aid to disaster- and disease-stricken countries in the Americas, in Africa and in Asia. Evidently, this spirit is a tangible expression of the following words of that great Cuban, José Martí:

*“Happiness exists on earth, and it is won through prudent exercise of reason, knowledge of the harmony of the universe, and constant practice of generosity.”*

¡Salud!

*CARICOM and Caribbean Affairs Division  
Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs  
Port of Spain  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
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