

**REMARKS DELIVERED BY MR. TEDWIN HERBERT, ACTING PERMANENT  
SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS, AT THE  
THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR RESCUE OF THE THAI FOOTBALL TEAM,  
AUGUST 12, 2018**

Today I represent Senator the Honourable Dennis Moses, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, and I wish to thank Mrs. Joan Wilson, Honorary Consul for the Kingdom of Thailand, for extending an invitation to this event.

Mrs. Joan Wilson, Honorary Consul for the Kingdom of Thailand in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago;

Your Excellency Tim Stew, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

Your Excellency John Pilbeam, High Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Australia;

Mr. John McIntyre, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Embassy of the United States of America;

Mrs. Zalayhar Hassanali;

Other distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Representatives of the religious community;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning.

On behalf of Senator the Honourable Dennis Moses, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, it is my pleasure to give remarks at this morning's thanksgiving service commemorating last month's remarkable rescue of twelve (12) boys and their football coach from the Tham Luang Nang Non (pronounced *Tam Loong Neng None*) Cave Complex in northern Thailand.

I will like to punctuate my remarks by noting that today is International Youth Day. The poster behind me says, "Thailand – a taste of adventure", and this incident was even more than an adventure.

The news that the *Wild Boars* were inadvertently caged first came to our attention in late June 2018. Who would have thought that an innocent escapade to celebrate a team member's birthday would have led to such an ordeal? As days turned into weeks this story gripped the world, which looked on in anxious hope for the safe return of those inside. Fortunately, our terror turned into triumph when we learned that all thirteen (13) persons were safely extracted, against the formidable odds.

At this thanksgiving service, let us pay homage to those thirteen, who worked together to ensure their survival. From Adul Sam-on, the young boy with a love for languages who was able to communicate in English with the divers who found them, to Ekapol Chantawong, the coach who taught his protégés meditation techniques to keep them calm, we salute you.

It is also my view that the Thai people should be commended. In the eye of intense media scrutiny, they displayed selflessness and generosity, rushing to the site to

help the experts who were devising an evacuation strategy. Citizens provided a variety of services free of charge, such as translation, laundry services, on-site cleaning, food preparation and car rides. The Thais also exhibited great strength and faith, remaining optimistic and performing religious services throughout the country, even at the mouth of the cave.

Today's service also provides us with a unique opportunity to celebrate a victory not only for Thailand, but for the entire global community. This rescue mission, from all accounts a complex and risky one, was made possible through the power of international cooperation. Thai security forces were joined by military and medical officials and volunteers from across the world. On the ground, there was representation from the United States and Canada in North America; Belgium, Denmark and the United Kingdom in Europe; and the Asian-Pacific countries of Australia, China, Laos, Myanmar and Japan. Other countries also offered crucial resources to ensure the mission's success.

Although the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was not in a position to render similar assistance, I have been informed that our citizens played their part by offering their thoughts and prayers for a favourable resolution, calling the Royal Thai Consulate to extend their support.

Given the high margin for error, it was to everyone's relief that this unfortunate situation had a good ending. At this juncture, however, I take this opportunity to pay respects to former Thai Navy Seal Saman Gunan, the lone casualty of the difficult process. May he forever be remembered as a true hero.

As I close, I wish the People of the Kingdom of Thailand good health, peace and prosperity. May the outcome of this situation inspire the Kingdom and all of us in

the international community to remain committed to meaningful collaboration for the common good.

I thank you.