

**Statement by the Acting Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs,  
on the occasion of the 243rd Anniversary of the Independence of  
the United States of America**

**July 03, 2019**

Good evening,

Your Excellency, it is my pleasure to join you at this evening's reception to commemorate the 243<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America. On behalf of Prime Minister, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, and on my own behalf, I wish to extend warm congratulations on this special occasion.

The United States of America and Trinidad and Tobago have enjoyed a warm and friendly bilateral relationship dating back to the establishment of diplomatic relations on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1962, approximately fifty-seven (57) years ago. The Embassy of the United States of America was established in Port of Spain that same day, replacing the former Consulate General. The United States Embassy has become part of the landscape in Port of Spain and is welcomed by the People of Trinidad and Tobago.

Your Excellency, as you commemorate your first National Day as Ambassador of the United States to Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to commend the Embassy for its commitment to strengthening relations between our two countries. Bilateral collaboration

between Trinidad and Tobago and the United States is strong and ongoing on a myriad of issues such as citizen security, education, culture, youth affairs, energy, trade, technical assistance and the training of military and law enforcement personnel.

In this regard, I wish to highlight initiatives undertaken by the Embassy to partner with rural communities on matters of disaster preparedness and relief, economic development, crime prevention, security and the management and protection of our borders.

In particular, I wish to acknowledge the three-phase strategy piloted by the U.S. Embassy, and driven by public-private partnerships, through the “SafeCommuniTT” initiative. Through the SafeCommuniTT initiative, a group of key influencers and stakeholders have learned to create credible messaging campaigns to counter radicalization through exchange programs in the United States, focused on countering crime and violent extremism. The dedication of these individuals to community service and assisting at-risk populations must be commended.

Your Excellency, the increased collaboration this year on issues of disaster preparedness and resiliency is also especially appreciated given the increasing challenges of ever changing weather patterns. In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago was pleased to participate in the Minister-level Dialogue on Hurricane Preparedness and Disaster Resiliency in the Caribbean, which took place last April in Miami. A significant outcome of this was the launch of the U.S.-Caribbean Resilience Partnership which involves a series of targeted initiatives aimed at improving resilience to natural disasters in the Caribbean region.

On the security front, I wish to highlight the importance and the benefits to the region of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). At the 8<sup>th</sup> Caribbean-US High Level Dialogue on Security Cooperation held in Washington, DC, in May Trinidad and Tobago and other Member States of CARICOM joined with the United States in recommitting among other things, to reducing illicit trafficking; increasing safety and security; preventing youth crime and violence; and establishing a stronger security partnership for the future. Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to working with the United States on these critical undertakings.

Your Excellency, as I conclude, I wish to take this opportunity to express gratitude for the significant and very valuable contributions made by the United States Embassy over the past year in facilitating increased engagement and active cooperation between our two countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my distinct pleasure on behalf of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, and on my own behalf, to extend once again congratulations to the Government and people of the United States of America on their 243<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Independence.

May I ask you to raise your glasses in a toast to the Government and people of the United States of America.

I thank you.