



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
TO THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA**

**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the  
105<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration  
(IOM)**

Mr. Chairman,

June of this year marked the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Trinidad and Tobago's Membership in the IOM and in April next year, we will signal 10 years of partnership between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the IOM. It is with this in mind that it remains an honour for me to address this 105<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council. The honour is magnified, since this is the first time Trinidad and Tobago is addressing the Council.

Over the last decade, the challenges associated with international migration have become much greater in scale and scope. Within this context, the IOM has been a valuable partner to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, as it seeks to address these challenges. IOM's expertise has contributed significantly to strengthening the country's migration management system.

This expertise has been provided through several projects, including:

- the project for Strengthening Technical Capacity in Trinidad and Tobago which has worked to bolster the capabilities of the Immigration Division and other law enforcement agencies in our country;
- the Data Sharing Mechanism project which has helped Trinidad and Tobago and fellow Caribbean countries improve our capacity to collect and exchange migration-related data, with a view to enhancing regional and national dialogue and cooperation on intra-regional migration: and,
- the Counter-Human Trafficking Initiative to address the issue of human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago. The Work Plan sought to address the issue of trafficking in persons from principle bases, such as Prevention and Protection (victim-centred) and that of Prosecution (crime-focused). I must underline that this particular collaboration resulted in the development of

national legislation to address human trafficking. The Trafficking in Persons Act was proclaimed in January 2013

Presently, my Government, through the Ministry of National Security, is reviewing a project proposed by the IOM entitled "*Providing Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) from Trinidad and Tobago*", the overall aim of which, is to establish an efficient and humane return mechanism and to build the national capacity to manage the repatriation of illegal migrants.

These and other initiatives underscore our Government's commitment to addressing the issue of migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Such an approach is crucial given Trinidad and Tobago's geographical, economical and social specificities which make it quite vulnerable to the challenges of irregular migration.

My Government is currently reviewing our Immigration Policy in order to appropriately address the evolving realities regarding migration. This review of the Immigration Legislation and the development of a revised national immigration policy were deemed essential to ensure that Trinidad and Tobago takes into account international and regional trends in migration. To this end, national consultations have been held with the relevant stakeholders in respect of the policy in order to collate the necessary input to formulate a comprehensive policy document.

Further, I am pleased to inform that our country is one step closer to creating legislation in respect of refugees and asylum-seekers. Trinidad and Tobago in June 2014 approved a national policy to address matters relating to refugees and asylum seekers. The adoption of this policy means that the Government can begin to establish a Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedure in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Chairman, the declaration that emanated from the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held in October last year, recognised that "*international migration is a cross-cutting phenomenon that should be addressed in a coherent, comprehensive and balanced manner, integrating development with due regard for social, economic and environmental dimensions and respecting human rights*". It further called for all stakeholders – Governments, the UN system and other relevant intergovernmental, regional and sub-regional organizations, including the IOM, to work to ensure that migration and development is fully addressed within the context of the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Cognizant of the interconnectedness of migration and development, Trinidad and Tobago has already made important initiatives to address the issue. Last year, we held our first National Forum on Migration and Development. This Forum presented an opportunity for the thoughts and ideas from civil society organisations and national government agencies working in the field of migration to discuss the various roles in development planning.

Along with proposals to address migration's role in sustainable development, the following issues were discussed:

- the management of migration within the framework of human rights;
- the maximisation of the potential impact of labour mobility; and
- the development of multi-levelled partnerships for the mainstreaming of migration into governance systems locally and internationally,

The outcomes of the National Forum would be used to inform Trinidad and Tobago's future policy-making as regards migration and development in a multicultural society.

Mr. Chairman, we stress the need for the recognition of the nexus between migration and policy formulation. We will therefore be guided by the discussions and exchange of best practice in international fora such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Further, the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development at a national consultation on the United Nations' 2015 Development Agenda held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2013, underscored the importance of managing migration, especially with a focus on the contribution that migrants could make to host and origin countries. The benefits of migration are derived inter alia through cultural diffusion, diaspora networks and remittances.

Mr. Chairman, in concluding, permit me to reiterate our recognition that international migration brings with it several challenges AND opportunities for a country of origin and destination such as Trinidad and Tobago. My Government is therefore committed to addressing the challenges, while harnessing the opportunities. To this end, we look forward to the continuation of fruitful collaboration with the IOM, as we seek to formulate this critical element of our sustainable development agenda.

Thank you.

***Delivered by H.E. John C.E. Sandy***  
***Permanent Representative***