



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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STATEMENT

by

Senator the Honourable Bhoendradatt Tewarie
Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

at

the Special Event of the President of the General
Assembly to follow up on efforts made towards achieving
the Millennium Development Goals



United Nations Headquarters

September 25, 2013

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Trinidad and Tobago aligns itself with the statement delivered by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We join in the consensus for the adoption of the outcome document of this meeting, and fully endorse its recommendations for accelerating efforts for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015, as well as the pathways it outlines for the launch of intergovernmental discussions on the Post 2015 development agenda.

Trinidad and Tobago has made significant strides in its domestic efforts to achieving the MDGs. As a result we are well on our way to achieving 70% of the Millennium Development Goals, based on the 43 MDG indicators our country has embraced, by the target of 2015. 42% of these targets we have already met. Another 28% is achievable.

There are areas in which we have done very well such as gender parity in education; reducing HIV morbidity; improving access to sanitation facilities; reducing the consumption of ozone depleting substances and increasing the use of information and communication technology. All children are successfully immunized against Measles, and Malaria and Tuberculosis have virtually been eliminated.

Trinidad and Tobago will meet the target of reducing the proportion of persons living below US \$1 per day and extreme hunger has been, by and large, eliminated. As a result of current progress, Trinidad and Tobago is likely to meet targets for an increasing share of women in wage employment, outside of agriculture, and our country will achieve important reductions in both infant mortality and maternal mortality rates.

Co Chairs,

I am honoured to address this Assembly at this special event. On behalf of Trinidad and Tobago I make a commitment that our country will scale up and intensify efforts toward achieving the MDGs before 2015. We will realize this objective through our policy agenda, our legislative thrust, our annual budgetary allocations and through our three year rolling Public Sector Investment Programme.

Since 2011, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has been striving for poverty reduction at the rate of 2% per year. Poverty has fallen in our country from 24% in 1997, to 14.7% at the present time, through a multifaceted strategy including land rationalization, squatter regularization, social transfers, skills training, job creation and encouraging micro and small enterprise creation.

We have surpassed the MDG requirements for Education: Universal primary and secondary education has been achieved. A tertiary participation rate of 47.6% has been achieved against a target of 60% by 2015. Universal early childhood education by 2015 is now being vigorously pursued.

Gender equality goals are being achieved with 66% of tertiary graduates being women; in Trinidad and Tobago women are making strategic advances.

Poverty reduction, human development, gender and health and hospitals are all priorities for budgetary allocation. In health, the challenges are being addressed as follows: a testing policy, strengthened national surveillance system and education and awareness campaigns for HIV aids. Chronic diseases are receiving stronger care and support at Health Centres well distributed through the country. A national campaign on diet, exercise and preventative measures is being driven by our Health Ministry in order to address the persistent challenges posed by non-communicable diseases.

In the area of environmental sustainability, Trinidad and Tobago is pursuing policies and initiatives to increase the use of new and innovative technologies that have lower levels of green house gas emissions; has undertaken to expand the use of clean energy technology such as natural gas technology and clean production technology and has adopted more energy- efficient technologies and practices. Along with the adoption of a climate change policy, as well as the development of a renewable energy policy, Trinidad and Tobago is working toward streamlining environmental action across all pillars of its development plans. With regard to State-owned vehicles and public transportation. CNG stations are being equipped across the country and mobile stations are part of the stock. Energy efficiency is being promoted in industrial processes sector and in power generation. One of the major traffic routes is being converted to a CNG bus.

Forests are being re-planted. Construction has been halted above the 300ft contour line. A national Spatial Development Strategy has been completed and is being introduced for Parliamentary Debate and a new Planning and Facilitation of land Bill has been introduced in Parliament taking sustainable development practices and community involvement in regional planning into account. We have banned trawling in Trinidad and Tobago waters, we have established a two-year moratorium on hunting; leather back turtles are protected by law and the communities.

We have held extensive consultations in Trinidad and Tobago to develop out Post 2015 development goals agenda. At the national level we have agreed on ten (10) items:

- (i) Poverty eradication and gender equality
- (ii) Food security and sustainability
- (iii) Health and well being
- (iv) Good governance
- (v) Diversification
- (vi) Youth and ageing
- (vii) Climate Change Adaptation
- (viii) Managed Migration
- (ix) Human Security
- (x) Harnessing creativity and Imagination

You may be curious about the priority of harnessing creativity and unleashing the human imagination. In a world of contradictions, paradoxes, complex, and many times, imperfect choices, and uncertain options, it would be difficult to create the sustainable future we want with a fixed road map.

To achieve sustainable development, balancing economic, environmental and socio-cultural challenges, with poverty eradication and climate change as areas of critical focus, innovation and innovative interventions are absolutely necessary. Where will innovation come from if not from the creativity of the human imagination unleashed for collaborative thinking and action? That therefore means that the

bedrock of our formal and informal structures for education must be made to promote not just learning but creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation and solution finding and formulation.

Co-chairs,

From 2010, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has been pursuing policy within a clear framework for Sustainable Development. The Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development drives policy but also determines allocations for Development projects according to sustainable development principles aligned to five priorities. The Ministry of Finance does the same for the annual recurrent budget. These realities support policy coherence and integrated planning and execution.

It is evident that Trinidad and Tobago, like many other developing countries, is making a considerable domestic effort, utilizing its own resources, toward the achievement of the MDGs, and will continue to do so toward 2015. I must highlight however that additional support from the international community would greatly facilitate our efforts. We regret that a robust and effective global partnership for development has not emerged over the past years in furtherance of the MDG agenda. Nevertheless, we look forward to an enhanced effort to address the outstanding issues in relation to this goal even as we plan ahead for the Post 2015 development agenda.

I pledge the continued support of Trinidad and Tobago in advancing the discussions as we move forward. I thank you.