

Theme: "Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda to address social and economic challenges and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation".

Thank you Mr. President for the opportunity to contribute at this august assembly. Trinidad and Tobago's delegation joins in congratulating you on your appointment as President in the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. We wish you success during your tenure and pledge our fullest support.

As a partner, Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to the United Nation's agenda for crime prevention and criminal justice. In keeping with this agenda, we would like to share some of the successes we have achieved and some initiatives we have taken in our country.

LEGISLATION, POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Trinidad and Tobago's fight against domestic, regional and transnational crime is foremost on its legislative agenda. The country's geographical location makes it an attractive transshipment point for drug traffickers and the other illegal ancillary activities such as money laundering, illegal trafficking in firearms and ammunition and offences related to corruption and human trafficking. As such this also puts the country in an ideal position to offer international cooperation in the combat of transnational crime since the final destination of such supply is usually the major metropolitans.

Apart from longstanding legislation such as our **Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act 1997** and **Extradition (Commonwealth and Foreign Territories) Act 1985**, which form the general basis for international cooperation, over the last ten (10) years Trinidad and Tobago has continuously made concerted efforts to comply with international Financial Action Task Force standards on anti-money laundering and combatting the financing of terrorism. Various pieces of legislation such as the **Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA)**, the **Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA)**, the **Financial Intelligence Unit Act (FIU)**, and the **Trafficking in Persons Act** have

kept the country consistent with international trends and are a meaningful and significant step in the fight against money-laundering and terrorism.

Other critical legislative changes target the financing of terrorism specifically. Trinidad and Tobago has enacted legislation which substantially increases the fines and penalties under our Anti-Terrorism Act and widened the pool of assets that can be frozen and confiscated where there is evidence linking the owner to terrorist financing.

In addition to Anti-Terrorism legislation, the government has established an inter-ministerial committee comprising the Attorney General, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Security to spearhead the efforts towards achieving compliance and monitor the progress of all relevant state agencies.

To deal with the global issue of Human Trafficking, the Trafficking in Persons Act was brought into force in 2011 and a Counter Trafficking Unit was established under the Ministry of National Security in January, 2013.

Since its formation the Counter Trafficking Unit rescued thirteen victims and charged eleven persons for human trafficking. In addition to the Counter Trafficking Unit, a National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons was created to establish policies and to develop a national plan of action against human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago. We are currently working towards establishing designated shelters or safe houses for the victims of human trafficking.

Being a major transshipment point for illegal arms and ammunition Trinidad and Tobago has also taken the initiative to co-sponsor the UN Arms Trade Treaty. The First Preparatory Meeting towards the First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty was held in Trinidad and Tobago from the 23-24 February, 2015.

The anticipated regulation of the International Trade in Conventional Arms using the highest possible common international standards, is expected "to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade

in conventional arms and prevent their diversion; to contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability; to reduce human suffering; and to promote cooperation, transparency and responsible action by States Parties to the ATT in the international trade in conventional arms.”

Trinidad and Tobago also acknowledges new and emerging forms of transnational crime. Progress has been made through legislative measures with regard to Cyber-Crime through our proposed Cyber Crime Bill, Piracy through our Copyright Act, Identity-related crime through our Data Protection Act and Environmental Crime through the strengthening of our Conservation of Wildlife Act and recent anti-hunting policies.

Witness protection has become of utmost importance in achieving adequate Criminal Justice. Trinidad and Tobago is an active and leading contributor in the development of CARICOM’s regional witness protection strategy. Having enacted the Justice Protection Act 2000, a Witness Protection Program was established in May of 2003. In our conduct of the Witness Protection Program, Trinidad and Tobago cooperates and collaborates with more than a dozen states.

Criminal Justice requires not only justice for victims but the rehabilitation and successful re-entry into society of the convicted person. One of the major challenges Trinidad and Tobago faces is its 53% recidivism rate, where within three years of release, roughly half of those released return to prison. In its efforts to conquer this challenge, Trinidad and Tobago prison service signed a Memorandum of Understanding with correctional services Canada as it moves to reform the local penal system. This reform targets specific areas within the Prison Service for intervention including developing a more scientific approach for the management of offenders; correctional programs and policies targeting attitudes and behaviours of inmates that predisposes them to a life of crime; implementation of information technology solutions for correctional environment.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Public participation is a major component in the strengthening of crime prevention and criminal justice. Through the protective services, we have created and implemented several social programs aimed at youth development and training with a view to steer young adults away from the path of crime.

Under our Ministry of National Security, we have developed several social programs aimed at at-risk youth. The Civilian Conservation Corps, the Military led Youth Program of Apprenticeship and Reorientation Training and the National Youth Service have all been created and designed to offer introductory training, life skills development and on the job training to at-risk youth at different stages. Their objectives include: raising the self-esteem of young people; initiate intervention that would assist in fostering socially desirable behaviours among youth; train and develop unemployed/unemployable young adults; and to foster a sense of national pride in the participants.

Recently launched is the Community Comfort Patrol program, which offers patrol services to 15 residential communities and counting, in Trinidad and Tobago. This program is an initiative built on the relationship between the State and the private sector wherein the Ministry of National Security controls the program and it is executed by private security firms. Through this initiative, Trinidad and Tobago hopes to increase police visibility in communities in order to deter crimes and provide comfort for residents.

To further encourage citizens to participate in criminal justice, we have set up programs which encourage persons to report suspect crimes and to give information to the police which may

lead to arrests. Programs such as "Crime Stoppers" encourage citizens to share information concerning criminal activity safely and anonymously and often offers rewards.

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to make this presentation and Trinidad and Tobago again pledges its support towards the UN Convention on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.