



THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Address
by
The Minister of National Security
at the
Opening of the Americas Conference:
“Enhancing Capacities in the Region Through
Collaborative Partnerships”

Date: Monday 14th December 2015

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Hilton Trinidad, Grand Ballroom

Good morning to all of you.

It is indeed a privilege and a pleasure for me to stand in for the substantive Minister of National Security, Major General (Ret'd) Edmund Dillion, to deliver opening remarks to such a selective group of professionals, who must be thanked and applauded for dedicating your lives, every day, to working tirelessly towards making our countries as safe places for us to exist and go about our daily lives.

I also take immense pleasure in welcoming you to our beautiful twin-island state, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, for the “**Americas Conference: *“Enhancing Capacities in the Region Through Collaborative Partnerships”***”.

For those of you who are here in Trinidad and Tobago for the very first time, I hope that you can avail yourselves of the opportunity to enjoy our many cultural expressions before you depart our shores.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the importance of having the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) as a strategic partner in its fight against transnational organised crime. Therefore, please allow me to convey my Government’s sincerest appreciation to the team at INTERPOL, for

convening and organising this Conference and for allowing us the opportunity to host it on this occasion.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the phenomenon we call Globalization must not become something that we are afraid of. While globalization has expanded international trade to the economic benefit of many countries around the world, we are quite aware that it has also diversified the range of organised crime activities that countries now face. This is a phenomenon that we have been, and we must continue to, confront head on. We would only be able to effectively combat this broadening range of criminal activity through concerted, strategic and collaborative co-operation at a global level. INTERPOL plays an ever expanding and critical role in this battle.

Organized crime has manifested itself in different activities, including:

- Drug Trafficking and Trafficking in Firearms;
- Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Smuggling of Migrants;
- Money Laundering;
- Terrorism; and
- Cyber Crime.

Without a doubt, the global security landscape has shifted over the years and continues to do so as a consequence of this dynamic and evolving world that we live in.

In the Caribbean Basin, the challenge of avoiding the scourge of the illicit trafficking, the associated laundering of funds, as well as other international criminal activities, is intensifying. The links between the trafficking of drugs, firearms, humans and other forms of organised crime, therefore calls for a more integrated and co-operative approach to address the various areas of nexus.

For us in the Caribbean, the Heads of Government from the Caribbean Community, as well as, the CARICOM Council of Ministers responsible for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) recognize the need for such an approach, and support international collaboration and partnerships to address the ever changing challenges of crime and security.

From a national perspective, please permit me to share with you, what Trinidad and Tobago is doing with regard to the issues of Human Trafficking and Cybercrime, two (2) thematic areas on which this Conference would be focusing.

With respect to Human Trafficking, through close collaboration with its international partners, Trinidad and Tobago developed a Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Policy Framework in 2009 which resulted in the development of a TiP Act, 2011, to give effect to the Palermo Protocols. This then led to the proclamation of the TiP Act, 2011 and the establishment of a Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) in January 2013. As a result, today, the CTU is responsible for managing the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's response to human trafficking. Further, since the establishment of the CTU, the Ministry of National Security:

- established an inter-ministerial National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons in July 2014;
- committed a dedicated budget and full-time staff for the Counter Trafficking Unit with significant amounts spent on human trafficking joint operations and rescue missions;
- identified 27 victims of trafficking;
- charged 15 TT nationals for human trafficking and human trafficking-related offences; and
- conducted a National Threat Assessment of Human Trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago involving over 50 key stakeholders and partners

The CTU is committed to working along with foreign partners, International Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to combat the illicit human trafficking trade in Trinidad and Tobago.

In respect of Cyber Crime, as we are all aware the internet has become a tool to commit and facilitate crime, which may result in devastating disruption in a nation's critical infrastructure, economy and national security. Attention must therefore be paid to the exploitation of technology and accordingly, buttressing our technological capabilities and developing cyber security strategies is paramount. Trinidad and Tobago is currently finalising its overarching cyber security machinery to create a more secure and resilient cyber environment which would deter terrorist and other criminal related activity via the Internet and social media.

- In December 2012, the Government approved the National Cyber Security Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago. This Strategy aims to guide all national initiatives regarding cyber security. It recognises the critical need for an overarching governance framework, appropriate cybercrime legislation and the establishment of a national Cyber Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT). It also acknowledges the importance of building awareness among all stakeholders – i.e. government, business

and citizens - of their roles and responsibilities in establishing and maintaining a secure ICT environment;

- In 2013, a National Cybercrime Policy, and a policy for the establishment of a Trinidad and Tobago Cyber Security Agency (TTCSA) were approved;
- A Cybercrime Bill, a Bill for the Establishment of the TTCSA and related legislation are currently being drafted and reviewed and will be brought to the Parliament in 2016; and
- Over the period 2014 – 2015, Trinidad and Tobago collaborated with the International Telecommunication Union to assist with the development and establishment of a national CSIRT.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is aware of the challenges and threats faced by this issue, and have, been working on strategies to reduce the nation's vulnerability.

Distinguished Commissioners of Police and Officers, as guardians of our citizens' safety and security, our goal is to develop and adopt viable and innovative strategies which will redound to the benefit of our respective peoples. In this regard, I have been informed that the objectives of this august Conference, include *inter alia*, the launching of a two-year project to strengthen the capacity of Central American and Caribbean countries to fight cybercrime and human trafficking, as well as, presenting a proposal for the establishment of an INTERPOL

Liaison Office for the Caribbean. This is a move that we welcome and encourage. It could only result in the benefit of the global fight against criminal elements, especially in these two areas, for us to have an INTERPOL Liaison Office for the Caribbean. The effective sharing of crime fighting initiatives and intelligence in this contracting global environment is a necessity.

Initiatives such as these when managed efficiently would enhance the capacity of the National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in the Caribbean region, through the provision of timely INTERPOL support to law enforcement investigations, offering training for police forces, and promoting regional operations in different crime areas.

Ladies and gentlemen, Trinidad and Tobago indeed recognizes the need to ensure close regional and international cooperation and coordination, as well as, the need to establish, maintain and strengthen strategic partnerships in addressing the issues of crime and security.

As such, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to the result of the discussions over the next two days and remains a willing partner in achieving its objectives.

My sincerest thanks to all of you and thank you for your kind attention and may God bless and guide your discussions and deliberations over the next couple of days.