



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

SEACOP PHASE V STAKEHOLDERS MEET TO ADVANCE EFFORTS TO COUNTER MARITIME TRAFFICKING

Port of Spain: On Friday June 30, 2023, Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P., chaired a meeting of the National Steering Committee for the Seaport Corporation Project (SEACOP) Phase V.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of National Security's Head Office, Abercromby Street, Port of Spain, was co-chaired by Deputy Regional Coordinator for SEACOP in the Caribbean region, Commander Jason Kelshall.

SEACOP, a collaborative initiative with the European Union (EU), was established in 2010 and is one dimension of the wider European Commission-funded Cocaine Route Programme (CRP). SEACOP seeks to build capacities and strengthen cooperation against maritime trafficking in countries on the trans-Atlantic cocaine route (West Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean). The project's activities include the creation of inter-agency units in key ports, as well as the establishment of national maritime information systems to promote information sharing.

Head of Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish, also present at the meeting, indicated that the EU stands ready to deepen security cooperation in the Caribbean region. Minister Hinds thanked His Excellency Cavendish for his continued support to initiatives aimed at combatting transnational crime, in particular the transshipment of illicit narcotics, and welcomed additional cooperation.

Meeting discussions included additional support to strengthen ongoing anti-drug trafficking operations, through the establishment of partnerships with additional agencies and projects; the donation of maritime security equipment; and succession planning for inter-agency units created to operationalize SEACOP locally.

Also in attendance at the meeting were Vice Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier General Dexter Francis; Commissioner of Police, Mrs. Erla Harewood-Christopher; Deputy Chief Immigration Officer (Ag.) Ms. Mary Roseann St. Hill-Billouin;

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Deputy Comptroller of Customs and Excise, Mr. Bernard Nicholas; Head of the National Operations Fusion Centre Lieutenant Colonel Dexter Metivier; and Deputy Director of the International Affairs Unit, Ministry of National Security, Major (Ret'd) Richard Lynch.

In May 2022, Minister Hinds and His Excellency Peter Cavendish signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to implement the fifth phase of the SEACOP, which is expected to run until December 2023. At the National Steering Committee meeting on June 30, it was announced that a sixth phase of SEACOP will be implemented, with continued funding from the European Union.

Photo and caption:



(Seated from left to right): Deputy Regional Coordinator for the Seaport Corporation Project (SEACOP) in the Caribbean region, Commander Jason Kelshall; Head of Delegation of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish; Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P.; Commissioner of Police, Mrs. Erla Harewood-Christopher; and Vice Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier General Dexter Francis, with other representatives, at a meeting of the National Steering Committee for SEACOP Phase V, held on Friday June 30, 2023 at the Ministry of National Security's Head Office in Port of Spain.

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