



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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MEDIA RELEASE

STAKEHOLDERS MEET AT SENSITISATION WORKSHOP TO BOLSTER CYBER SECURITY EFFORT

Port of Spain: Cybercrime and threats to cyber security pose a serious concern and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is taking swift and decisive steps to minimise the costly negative impact on the country and its citizens.

This was the assurance given by the Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds, M.P., as he delivered the feature address at the Opening Ceremony for the National Cybercrime and Cyber Security Sensitisation Workshop on Friday, January 26, 2024.

The two-day workshop was hosted jointly by the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), the European Union (EU), and the Ministry of National Security. Workshop sessions were intended to raise awareness of cybercrime issues for senior policymakers and technocrats in the public service including Permanent Secretaries and Directors of Units/Agencies; representatives from civil society organisations, law enforcement, the Judiciary, and the business community. The programme concluded on Monday, January 29, 2024.

Minister Hinds noted *"As a response to national cyber security threats, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, through the Ministry of National Security, established the Cyber Security Incident Response Team (TT-CSIRT). TT-CSIRT is presently working on developing a cybersecurity risk framework, for the coordinated response and management of cyber incidents in Trinidad and Tobago."*

Noting that cyber security threats were a transnational and cross-border concern, the Minister said they posed a serious challenge to a country's peace and sovereignty, threatening the social and economic well-being of its citizens. He acknowledged CARICOM IMPACS and the EU as key partners in the national security effort, and thanked them for their continuous collaboration with the Ministry and the wider Caribbean region.

The Minister said he anticipated a positive outcome from the workshop as it was designed to *"make stakeholders more aware of cybercrime threats and more*

equipped to respond to those cyber security challenges, as individuals, as professionals, as a region and as an international community.”

Also delivering remarks was Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the European Union (EU) to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish. Ambassador Cavendish said the EU *“had an enormous interest in supporting cross-border crime collaboration across its partner nations.”* He noted that *“cybercrime attacks in one country will inevitably, and at some point in time, affect other nations. This is why we are working to prioritize partnerships worldwide for technical assistance and information exchange.”*

His Excellency Cavendish recognised the EU’s strong, 47-year relationship with Trinidad and Tobago and committed the organisation’s continued support of national and regional cyber security initiatives.

Assistant Director – Corporate Services at CARICOM IMPACS, Mr. Earl Harris, said that *“in this era of rapid technological advancements, our dependence on digital infrastructure and communication is unparalleled, yet with these advancements comes an urgent need to safeguard our nations from the escalating threats in the digital realm.”* He shared that *“the losses due to cybercrime in 2023 were estimated to be eight trillion dollars, globally, an increase from three trillion dollars in 2021.”* The most common threats in the region, he said, were ransomware, phishing, and data breaches. Mr. Harris emphasised the importance of regional and international cooperation to mitigate cyber security threats.

Permanent Secretaries at the Ministry of National Security, Ms. Natasha Barrow and Ms. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan (Ag.) were also in attendance, along with Permanent Secretaries from other Government Ministries.

The Sensitisation Workshop is the final activity under the EU-funded 11th European Development Fund (EDF) cybercrime component, which seeks to enhance the detection and investigation of cybercrimes in compliance with international standards, as well as facilitate the adoption of a regional approach to ensure regional collaboration on cybercrime.

Photos and captions:



1. Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. (*second from left*); Assistant Director – Corporate Services at CARICOM IMPACS, Mr. Earl Harris (*third from left*); and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish (*fourth from left*), with Permanent Secretaries and other senior public service officials, at the Opening Ceremony for the National Cybercrime and Cyber Security Sensitisation Workshop on Friday January 26, 2024 at the Government Campus Plaza Auditorium in Port of Spain.

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2. Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. delivers the feature address at the Opening Ceremony for the National Cybercrime and Cyber Security Sensitisation Workshop on Friday January 26, 2024 at the Government Campus Plaza Auditorium in Port of Spain.



3. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Peter Cavendish delivers remarks at the Opening Ceremony for the National Cybercrime and Cyber Security Sensitisation Workshop on Friday January 26, 2024 at the Government Campus Plaza Auditorium in Port of Spain.

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4. Assistant Director – Corporate Services at CARICOM IMPACS, Mr. Earl Harris delivers remarks at the Opening Ceremony for the National Cybercrime and Cyber Security Sensitisation Workshop on Friday January 26, 2024 at the Government Campus Plaza Auditorium in Port of Spain.

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