



**NATIONAL STATEMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

DELIVERED BY

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SERVICES**
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

**SIXTIETH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
PRIORITY THEME:**

***“Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable
livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and
hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.”***

7- 16 February, 2022
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Madame Chair,

At the outset, Trinidad and Tobago aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community, CARICOM. It is a privilege and indeed a pleasure to address you on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at this, the 60th session of the Commission for Social Development. We extend our sincerest congratulations to you and through you, to the other members of the bureau on your election and underscore Trinidad and Tobago's full support and cooperation during this session.

Permit me also to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the reports in this session, in particular, the report on the priority theme which presented an analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on poverty and hunger at the global, regional and national levels, while also identifying credible strategies aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger, designed to build back better and move us closer towards the achievement of sustainable development by 2030.

Madame Chair, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many socio-economic challenges, which have negatively affected many lives and livelihoods. In light of these setbacks, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, recognizing that our people are our greatest asset, established a Roadmap to Recovery Committee, to chart the way forward in re-stimulating the economy and society for growth and stability post the pandemic. Under the strategic pillar of **'Social Protection - Leave No One Behind,'** this Committee, has a core objective of ***'Protecting the Vulnerable and the Displaced and Using the Social Safety Net to build a stronger Trinidad and Tobago'*** in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this regard, the Government continues to deliver a range of social support measures to cushion the repercussions of the pandemic. These measures ensure that the persons who are most affected, can at the very least, maintain a basic standard of living. In addition to the pre-existing policy measures to support those most vulnerable, Income and Salary Support Grants were introduced and the existing Food Support Programme was enhanced to ensure that the nutritional requirements of families are met, through several initiatives and partnerships involving the agricultural sector, non-governmental organizations, as well as faith based organizations.

In addition, the Government's thrust towards the completion of the digitalization of our social services has been recognised as a primary driver, as we continue to leverage the technology to build resilience, to secure and nurture our society and to eliminate hunger in all its dimensions. Furthermore, the introduction of the Microsite specifically targeting persons with disabilities and the launch of the online application for the Senior Citizens' Grant, speak to the Government's commitment to establishing an inclusive and nurturing environment to better address existing inequities in the system, for the benefit of all persons.

We also acknowledge that it is essential that we continue to build our resilience by undertaking transformational changes to our national social services delivery system. In this context, the coordinated mechanisms for the provision of the range of social services through a 'one door' approach, with the use of strategies for social empowerment are being developed, leveraging on our Integrated Social Enterprise Management Systems. These mechanisms will be supported by the implementation of a National Vulnerability Register, that will allow for improved service delivery, real-time data sharing, analysis and reporting, particularly in times of crisis and disaster.

Madame Chair, as a small island developing state, Trinidad and Tobago is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which could, at any time, result in coastal flooding, with damage to public infrastructure, loss of property, habitats, livelihoods, and agricultural land. Accordingly, we have sought to identify vulnerable communities in our country in order to design and implement effective adaptation strategies, which will facilitate the building of climate resilience and the attainment of sustainable development.

In addition to the vulnerabilities associated with climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and our significant dependence on energy, our high and growing food import bill continues to be of particular concern.

As you are aware, food security is an imperative to eradicate poverty, as well as end hunger and therefore, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the need to ensure that our country is able to produce most of the food it consumes through building resilient and sustainable agricultural systems.

Madame Chair, in Trinidad and Tobago, we fully accept that social progress must mean that *“no one is left behind”*; a society where there is equal opportunity to access social services, and all of our citizens, including the most vulnerable, such as, our elderly, our children and our youth, are cared for. That is the goal of our ‘Vision 2030’, our national development strategy, which aligns with Agenda 2030.

I therefore seize this opportunity to assure you that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is focused on providing a nurturing environment that teaches, promotes and reinforces attitudes, behaviours and skills needed to empower our people to further build on their innate creativity, and thus become highly

productive, for this is the gateway to creating sustainable lives and livelihoods. In this regard, the Government continues to chart a course for the development of a comprehensive National Poverty Reduction Strategy, which builds resilience, enabling our most vulnerable citizens to shift from a state of dependence on social support and transition to one of self – reliance and self-sustainability.

Madame Chair, as we move forward, I would like to underscore my government's unwavering commitment to eradicating multi-dimensional poverty and hunger by addressing issues of inequity, discrimination, economic and social marginalisation, and promoting initiatives aimed at ensuring that all of our citizens enjoy the highest attainable standard of health and well-being, which we recognize to be among their most basic human rights.

I thank you.