

## **Draft Closing Remarks**

**Wednesday 27th May, 2026**

### **Working Group 1 (WG1), Inter-American Committee on Social Development (CIDES) Virtual Technical Workshop - Disaggregated Measurement of Multidimensional Poverty**

Chair, Distinguished Representatives of Member States, representatives of the Organization of American States, esteemed technical experts, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

It is indeed a privilege to deliver these closing remarks on behalf of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and in my capacity as Vice-Chair of Working Group 1 of the Inter-American Committee on Social Development.

At the very outset, allow me to express sincere appreciation to the Inter-American Committee on Social Development, the Department of Social Inclusion of the Organization of American States, and all technical partners who contributed to the successful convening of this timely and deeply important workshop.

Today's engagement reaffirmed a reality that many of our nations confront daily that poverty cannot, and must not, be measured solely by income. Poverty is far more layered, far more human and far more complex.

It reveals itself in the absence of opportunity, in unequal access to healthcare and education, in inadequate housing, food insecurity, social exclusion and the inability of vulnerable citizens to fully participate in national life.

As policymakers and development practitioners, we therefore carry a responsibility to move beyond statistics in isolation and towards a fuller understanding of the lived experiences of our people. The discussions today demonstrated clearly that multidimensional poverty measurement gives governments a stronger and more compassionate lens through which to identify deprivation, target interventions and craft evidence-based policy responses that truly leave no one behind.

For countries within the Caribbean and wider Americas, this work carries even greater urgency.

Our societies continue to navigate economic volatility, climate vulnerabilities, public health challenges and widening inequalities that disproportionately impact the poor and vulnerable. Consequently, the need for reliable, disaggregated and people-centred data has never been more critical.

One of the strongest messages emerging from today's deliberations was the importance of disaggregation itself.

When poverty data is examined by territory, gender, age group, disability status and other social indicators, governments are better equipped to identify hidden disparities that national averages often conceal.

In many respects, these approaches allow us to place people, not merely numbers at the centre of public policy.

Equally significant was the discussion surrounding the institutionalization of Multidimensional Poverty Indices within national systems. The experiences shared today demonstrated that when integrated into planning, budgeting and programme development, these tools become powerful instruments for prioritization, accountability and social transformation.

In Trinidad and Tobago, we understand the value of evidence-based social protection systems. As a Government, we remain committed to strengthening the frameworks that support vulnerable citizens and ensuring that policy interventions are informed not merely by assumptions, but by credible and measurable realities on the ground.

Today's dialogue also highlighted the importance of collaboration across ministries, statistical offices, social protection agencies and international development partners. No single institution can effectively confront multidimensional poverty in isolation.

The dismantling of institutional silos, strengthening of interoperable systems and enhancement of regional cooperation must therefore remain central pillars of our collective agenda moving forward.

We also commend the continued efforts to facilitate regional knowledge-sharing and technical exchange among Member States.

The sharing of experiences, challenges and best practices strengthens our individual national capacities while simultaneously reinforcing regional solidarity in addressing inequality and social exclusion.

Colleagues, as we look ahead to the continued work of the Inter-American Committee on Social Development, I believe today's workshop has provided not only technical insights, but renewed momentum and collective purpose.

The conversations held today must ultimately translate into meaningful action, action that improves the quality of life of citizens, strengthens resilience among vulnerable populations and advances more equitable societies across the hemisphere.

In closing, let us continue to build societies where development is measured not only by economic growth, but by the dignity, inclusion and well-being of our people. Let us continue to strengthen our institutions, deepen cooperation and ensure that the most vulnerable among us are never invisible within our policy frameworks.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I thank you for your participation, your contributions and your shared commitment to advancing social development throughout the Americas.

I thank you.