



**Feature Address**

**The Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, MP  
Minister of Planning and Development**

**Sustainable Development Goals**

**Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Mission  
2017**

**April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

## **SALUTATIONS**

- Cabinet colleagues.
- Mrs. Joanne Deoraj, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development.
- All other Permanent Secretaries of sister Ministries
- Ms. Marie Hinds and Ms. Beverly Khan, Deputy Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Planning and Development
- Staff of the Ministry of Planning and Development.
- Mr. Richard Blewitt, Resident Coordinator, United Nations Country Team, and other representatives of the United Nations System.
- Mr. Nik Sekhran and the UN MAPS Mission Team.
- Specially invited guests,
- Members of the media,
- Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

It is truly an honour to welcome all of you here today as we continue to chart the way forward for the growth and development of Trinidad and Tobago through the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) Mission. Only recently the Cabinet approved the Draft National Development Strategy 2016-2030 which represented the culmination of hundreds of hours of consultation and collaboration amongst many stakeholders like you who are gathered here today and I would have the privilege of laying it before the Parliament on Friday for its consideration. That Vision 2030 document embodies, in large measure, the Sustainable Development Goals which we will speak more about in the coming seven days.

In this regard, I wish to sincerely thank Mr. Richard Blewitt and the members of the United Nations Country Team for their unwavering support in not only making the Mission a reality, but for being a true friend to Trinidad and Tobago. I also extend gratitude to the staff of the Ministry of Planning and Development, for their diligence and commitment to the task of reintroducing a level of robust planning and data driven decision making unseen in the public service of Trinidad and Tobago in the recent past.

Ladies and gentlemen, the launch of this MAPS process today represents the achievement of a significant milestone in a journey upon which this country embarked many years ago. Many of you would recall, for example, the extensive consultation that went into the Vision 2020 documents and our desire to create a progressive society catering to the needs of all its citizens; a preferred place to live, raise children, invest, do

business, work and go to school. We are all still on this journey of crafting a future for a Trinidad and Tobago that we can all proudly call home.

As part of a global movement to attain progressive change, Trinidad and Tobago joined the quest in 2000 to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to Magdy Martinez-Soliman, UN Assistant Secretary General, “the MDGs succeeded, in part, by tapping a widely held conviction that progress everywhere – particularly among the impoverished – enriches us all; not only because it drives peace and prosperity, but also because it is the right thing to do. Today’s challenge is to revive this shared conviction and use it to drive the leaps in progress we need to build a better future.”

Indeed, the Trinidad and Tobago Millennium Development Goals Report of 2014 indicated that Trinidad and Tobago achieved and in certain cases, surpassed most of the MDGs. Among the achievements were the following:

- The percentage of persons living below the poverty line of US\$1.00 per day declined from 24% to 14.8 %,
- Extreme hunger was almost eradicated, with only 1.2% of the population falling below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption,
- Universal primary and secondary education has been achieved,
- Universal Early Childhood Education is a reality,

- The tertiary level participation rate increased from 15 % in 2004 to 60% at the time of the country's report, thereby meeting the set target,
- Gender parity in primary and secondary level enrolment was achieved and women surpassed men at the level of tertiary participation,
- Trinidad and Tobago successfully met the targets relating to the Consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances, which declined from a high of 220 tonnes in 1998 to 34.34 tonnes in 2011.

Notwithstanding these significant accomplishments, Trinidad and Tobago remains part of a global community that continues to face an array of challenges that include rising inequalities, persistent and entrenched poverty, stubborn conflicts, contagious diseases, climate change, and rapid environmental degradation. Though these threats increase the vulnerability of all communities, the effects are more deleterious on those with fewer resources and capabilities, those most dependent on ecosystems and least able to exercise their rights to human security, to development, the right for their voices to be heard and the right to dignity.

In light of this realisation, two achievements stand out as beacons of hope. The first was the adoption of an ambitious new development agenda called Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by UN Member states. This focused on establishing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by all countries and stakeholders by 2030. The Second was the world's first universal climate deal agreement signed by 195 countries.

Today's launch of the MAPS Mission signals the commencement of our country's discussions on the development of an appropriate roadmap for implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as part of Trinidad and Tobago's own National Development Agenda, VISION 2030.

MAPS - Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support - was adopted by the UNDP in October 2015 as a common approach to its support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the country level. Today's mission launch brings together UNDP expertise, local policy experts, donors and influencers as the pilots on this journey of national development. As we travel together in partnership, recognising people as our key resource, we hope to embed critical thinking and the brainpower of those gathered at this mission into the MAPS process.

In essence, the MAPS Mission will:

- Mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 agenda at the national and local levels via integration into the national, sub-national and local plans for development. This stage also involves integrating these plans into national budget allocations. Some other elements of MAPS include raising public awareness; involving the experiences of you, the various stakeholders and gaining your support; ensuring monitoring, reporting and accountability measures are in place; creating sound policies and ensuring their adherence as well as assessing risk and fostering adaptability.

- Acceleration involves targeting National and UN resources toward the priority areas identified for development and paying attention to the challenges and opportunities in these areas.
- Policy support ensures that the skills and expertise in the UN Development System are utilised efficiently and effectively.

Today then, we are continuing with the UN team, the partnership for national development that has existed for so many years, and for which this Administration is exceedingly grateful. The immediate output of this exercise is a Mission Report and a summary of the Mission, including an assessment of the mission's objectives, roll out, outcomes and next steps and a SDGs Roadmap for Trinidad and Tobago identifying the areas for national development acceleration.

The truth is that in many ways, we are ahead of the game, as some areas for acceleration have already been identified by our Economic Development Advisory Board. These include, inter alia, manufacturing for export, tourism, creative industries and digital platforms. I wish to encourage persons, including our friends in the media, to please visit the EDAB's website at [www.edab.org.tt](http://www.edab.org.tt) for a more comprehensive presentation of their work plan and papers.

In January of this year the Ministry also initiated the Global Services Promotion Programme geared towards the development of skills via information technology enabled services (ITeS). A call for proposals has been launched via a Skills for Global Services Initiative, inviting businesses to partner with educational institutions and training providers to present proposals, develop skills, create jobs and ensure that there is adequate investment in the pipeline of talent our country needs to

transform the economy. This major step in capacity building is designed to make Trinidad and Tobago the regional centre of global services it can be.

Trinidad and Tobago's National Vision and Strategy aspires that by 2030, our nation will be able to sustain its own development and provide a high quality of life for all citizens for generations to come.

The Draft National Development Strategy (Vision 2030) provides the framework within which strategies and implementation plans can be developed; presents the broad priorities and the target time periods to achieve them; and provides for an orderly long term development process which is inclusive of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Five themes and outcomes for Trinidad and Tobago towards 2030 have been identified.

- **To put people first: nurturing our greatest asset** we have identified healthy citizens with first world skills as an outcome. This theme is connected to eight of the SDGs focused on zero hunger, no poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, reduced inequalities and sustainable cities and communities.
- **Delivering good governance and service excellence:** Good governance and service excellence are connected to four of the SDGs two of them being; peace, justice and strong institutions, and partnerships for the goals. Partnerships for the goals is the crux of our presence here today as we seek your partnership and involvement.

- **Valuing and enhancing our environment** is an important theme which has already seen achievements in the reduction of ozone depleting gases. The Ministry is also working with stakeholders in the Styrofoam industry to discuss the possible elimination of this product in food and beverage containers. A State of the Marine Environment Report with an Action Plan has been approved by Cabinet and will be presented to the public soon, and Cabinet has approved our participation in the Nagoya Protocol which will allow us to explore the potential of our flora and fauna as natural medicines. We are also moving rapidly to enhance our capacity in national recycling among a myriad of other initiatives. This theme is connected to nine of the SDGs.
- In order to **build globally competitive businesses** in the IT sector, we have already launched the Global Services Promotion programme, the Tamana Intech Park will become functional shortly, and there are other opportunities identified for diversification in this area.
- **Improving productivity through quality infrastructure and transportation** is a final theme identified and this will be achieved by pursuing the provision of world class infrastructure and connectivity.

I am indeed happy to say that the UNDP shares this country's goals of shaping a society based on peace, prosperity, partnership, planet and people (the 5 Ps of the SDGs), and has positioned itself as a frontline partner to support the work of refining Vision 2030. The UN, through this mission and future collaboration is partnering with us on the

operationalisation of our plans and policies and has pledged its support to assist us in monitoring and evaluation.

This mission will assist Government in charting and re-charting our institutional architecture toward implementation of our priorities, highlighting the cross sectoral leadership and coordination needed, and the new ways of working which implementing Vision 2030 will require. This is why you and your agencies have been identified as drivers to participate in this mission. We are not only putting people first, but putting you in the driver's seat to lead, guide and advise on what is needed to get this done. This is participatory democracy at its best.

As we launch this MAPS process today then, I am extremely happy that we have the full support of the United Nations and I give them the assurance that they have ours. I am confident that you, our stakeholders who have joined us today, are willing partners and co-pilots on this journey with us, and will therefore do what is necessary to see our beloved Trinidad and Tobago prosper. I again express my gratitude and wish you all success over the next seven days and beyond.

Thank you, and may God bless our nation.