

**MESSAGE OF DR. THE HONOURABLE KEITH CHRISTOPHER ROWLEY,
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ON THE
OCCASION OF UNITED NATIONS DAY, 2015, MARKING THE 70TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

On the occasion of United Nations Day, which is celebrated annually on 24th October, I am pleased to bring greetings on behalf of the Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago. Many have not pondered the role the United Nations has played in our daily lives, often conceiving of this Organization as remote and preoccupied with managing international conflict, peace-keeping, and avoiding war. These are all important and necessary aspects of the mission of the United Nations, but the United Nations represents much more than the promotion of order, peace and stability among nations.

The United Nations encapsulates the hopes and aspirations of People everywhere to live a life of dignity, freedom and individual fulfilment, unencumbered by the shackles of racism, prejudice, classism, religious or ethnic origin, gender disempowerment, and other forms of discrimination and exclusion. While it is true that the United Nations provides a forum that brings states together for dialogue to resolve their differences and to take common action in areas of agreement, it is also the reality that the United Nations places people at the very centre of its mandate. This has always been the case from the inception of the Organization 70 years ago, as eternally etched in the very first words of its Charter: “We the Peoples of the United Nations.”

It is therefore more than symbolic that in its 71st year, the community of nations launched, under the umbrella and leadership of the United Nations, the 2030 Action Agenda, the new framework for global development with 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets. All Members of the international community, including Trinidad and Tobago, committed by their own free will, to take measures in their national domains to implement the sustainable development agenda, a blueprint to eradicate poverty and social and economic exclusion from our societies, and to create ever increasing wealth through sound and coherent public policies administered by efficient, transparent and accountable governance that serves the best interests of the people in a just and equitable manner.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is determined to uphold these tenets and to so administer public policy as to ensure that opportunity to contribute to national development and to shape our communities and society is not the exclusive preserve of a select few granted favoured access due to circumstance of birth or social connections, but rather, that opportunity is open and accessible to everyone and anyone who has the will and ambition to dare to take the risk of pursuing success.

Through its work and advocacy, the United Nations has demonstrated its power and influence as a force for good in the world, whether through mobilizing to provide humanitarian aid and support to refugees fleeing from violent conflict, intervening to control and mitigate the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, ebola, SARS and the eradication of polio, or by defending the rights of young girls to have an education or by lobbying for concerted, robust and responsible coordinated international action to deal with the problem of Climate Change, shortly to command centre-stage at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, France, in December, 2015.

For Small States like Trinidad and Tobago, seeking its place in the world, devoted to the social and economic advancement of its people and indeed those of the Caribbean Community as a whole, the United Nations has afforded us the protection of international law, which acts as a restraint on the use of force or intimidation by the mighty over the weak. Just as in the domestic sphere where societies are built on a system of laws to govern relations between the people and the state as well as the interactions between and among the people themselves, international law regulates and prescribes, the freedoms and responsibilities of states in their interactions with other states. Our abiding faith in and adherence to the rule of law on the international plane has been the genesis of Trinidad and Tobago's dynamic contribution to the expanding corpus of law, built up by the United Nations to address specific problems in international society, and thus to promote order and predictability in the world.

On this UN Day, 2015, I convey the grateful thanks of the Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago to the Secretary General of the United Nations and his team, spread out across so many countries, working in the service of Peace, Development and Human Rights, often under perilous or uncomfortable conditions for the improvement of the lives of ordinary people. To those Members of the UN System working in Trinidad and Tobago, a special word of appreciation for your service and my Government looks forward, with anticipation, to collaborating with you in implementing our plans and programmes for sustainable national development in the months and years ahead.

Congratulations on the occasion of United Nations Day, 2015!