

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
ISSUED ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF HIS EXCELLENCY
NICOLÁS MADURO MOROS, PRESIDENT OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF
VENEZUELA
May 23rd, 2016

On May 23rd, 2016, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, received His Excellency Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and a High Level Delegation accompanying Him for an Official Visit to Trinidad and Tobago.

The Official Visit served to further advance bilateral discussions on matters of mutual interest and to expand and deepen collaboration in areas such as energy, security, trade, and culture, among others. It also confirmed the need to foster relations of respect, friendship and cooperation.

BILATERAL ISSUES

Prime Minister Rowley and President Maduro reaffirmed the historic friendship and partnership that exist between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela and welcomed the initiatives arising from the working visit, which was convened in Caracas on October 26th, 2015. They received feedback on the status of these initiatives and agreed on steps to further progress on same in pursuit of the security and prosperity of both nations.

Energy:

The Leaders expressed satisfaction at the developments in the area of energy cooperation and, in particular, with the advancement of technical-level work to facilitate the exploitation of the Loran-Manatee Cross-Border Hydrocarbon Reservoir, the largest of the three cross-border gas fields.

They welcomed the signing of the May 2016 Agreed Minutes concerning the Functional Structure and Governance for the Operation of the Loran-Manatee Unit Area and the review of the draft Unitisation and Unit Operating Agreement provided by the Exploration and Production Companies. They announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the Technical and Commercial Study related to the Natural Gas Export from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Trade:

Prime Minister Rowley and President Maduro discussed the various trading opportunities between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela and agreed to work with the private sector to promote the growth potential in areas such as light manufacturing and energy services. Both sides stressed the importance of bilateral investment in promoting growth and jobs to continue to expand two-way trade in goods and services, for the benefit of the peoples of both countries.

Security:

Both Leaders noted the ongoing collaboration and cooperation between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, particularly in the areas of drug interdiction, smuggling activities, human trafficking and other forms of transnational crime. They acknowledged the magnitude of these transboundary crimes, as well as the severity of the threat they pose to peace, safety, security, stability and sustainable development in both nations.

In this regard, they emphasized the need for continued cooperation and vigilance through existing mechanisms. In reiterating the importance of security cooperation between the two countries, Prime Minister Rowley and President Maduro committed to strengthening the valuable cooperation, the sharing of best practices and identified opportunities for future coordination, including through the implementation of the VENTRI Exercise in the first half of 2016.

Culture:

Prime Minister Rowley and President Maduro underlined the important advances made in the promotion of cultural cooperation in the areas of the performing arts and creative industry development. The leaders agreed to convene the Technical Cooperation programme as it relates to exchange of musicians between the El Sistema and the Music Schools in the Community Project; the performance of the National Steel Symphony Orchestra at the Simon Bolivar Music Foundation; and the process of twinning the City of Güiria with Tobago.

The leaders also agreed to promote the folk music of both countries, including the steel pan, through, *inter alia*, cooperation programmes within national, regional and local orchestras and identify new strategies and approaches to the design and implementation of cultural projects that address rural development and to further explore areas of expansion in the areas of Creative Industries, Heritage Preservation and Festivals.

Discussions were conducted in a positive, constructive atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. The two countries looked forward to strengthening the bilateral relationship further in 2016.

Issued in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on May 23rd, 2016