



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER 13-15
ST. CLAIR AVENUE, ST. CLAIR
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Attention: HEAD OF NEWS and EDITOR IN CHIEF

MEDIA RELEASE

6th July 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No. of Pages: 2

Contact: Public Information and Communications Unit
622-1625 Ext. 4013

BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND SURINAME

A bilateral meeting was held today, Wednesday 6th July, between Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname during the Thirty-Seventh Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The Trinidad and Tobago team was headed by Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley who was accompanied by Senator the Hon. Dennis Moses, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Ms Jenny G. Thompson, Mr Collin James and Ms Lynne Mohammed of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs as well as Ms Arlene Gorin-George, Press Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister. The Surinamese delegation was led by His Excellency President Desiré Delano Bouterse, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Niermala Badrising, State Advisor to the President Mr. Errol Alibux, Advisor to the President/Entrepreneur Mr. Dilip Sardjoe, and Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Annette Tjon Sie Fat.

At the meeting Prime Minister Rowley highlighted the need for CARICOM states to work together in business and proposed that the two nations collaborate with a view to producing quality ply wood for export to the United States, with Suriname providing the wood and Trinidad and Tobago providing the energy and adhesives needed. Dr Rowley also offered the vast experience and expertise of Trinidad and Tobago in the field of energy to assist Suriname as it moves forward with hydro-carbon exploration.

President Bouterse agreed on the importance of member states working together and expressed his willingness to move forward with the proposals put forward and the establishment of a team to do as quickly as possible. Suriname also expressed happiness with Dr Rowley's stated full support of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), however, concerns were expressed in relation to impediments faced in getting products manufactured in Suriname into Trinidad and Tobago. In response Prime Minister Rowley articulated Trinidad and Tobago's unwavering commitment to the spirit and principles of CARICOM and free trade.

Consequently, it was agreed that a team of technocrats comprising members from both countries will meet to explore the feasibility of the proposal and develop a business plan in that regard. As such, the Ministers of Trade and Industry and Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago stand ready to receive a team from Suriname within the next two weeks to proceed along those lines and a return visit from Trinidad and Tobago to Suriname will ensue thereafter.

-END-