



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**MESSAGE TO THE NATION
FROM DR THE HONOURABLE KEITH ROWLEY
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
40TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR REPUBLICAN STATUS**

Fellow citizens of Trinidad and Tobago

Today marks the 40th anniversary of our country's Republican Status.

Last year, as I prepared to celebrate my first Republic Day with you as Prime Minister, I had called on the nation to designate and observe Republic Day 2015 as a day of thanksgiving and prayer.

With the assistance of many willing hands, we were able to organise a very moving National Day of Prayer Interfaith Service at the Queen's Park Savannah, which was well-attended.

This year we will do the same and I invite you to again join us at the Grand Stand, Queen's Park Savannah, to stand together in prayer and thanksgiving for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon our young nation.

Despite the challenges which we now face, I continue to reiterate that we in this country have been and continue to be blessed even as we face difficulties. We are at a pivotal point in our country's development when, more than ever, the decisions that we make will determine our social and economic well-being for many years ahead.

However, with sound judgement, responsible governance, prudent management and determination to succeed against the odds, we do indeed have prospects for a very positive future.

About two weeks ago, in my address to the nation, I outlined many of the measures that this Government has implemented to preserve the macroeconomic stability of the country; promote sustainable, inclusive growth and to further advance regional and global integration. What I will also add now is that celebrating our Republican status today should remind us that 40 years ago we knew that we had the capacity, the aptitude and the expertise to take that final, decisive, legislative step to move from Constitutional Monarchy to a Republic.

The replacement of the Governor General, as the Queen's representative, to an indigenous President as Head of State and Head of the Parliament underscored an "expression of nationalist sentiment as we sought our own identity".

It is the fire of that nationalist sentiment that we should keep collectively burning intensely within us. We must use it to fuel our passion for taking this country steadily forward, towards constant improvement with a view to us all being the best that we could be individually and collectively as a nation.

It is this republican spirit which now calls us all to be responsible citizens, enjoying the benefits of being citizens of Trinidad and Tobago as well as sharing equally the burdens of all its challenges and legacies. Let us not flinch to fight the good fight, so that we can finish the course in a place that gives us the best opportunity for the quality of life which was this republican dream.

I therefore call on each and every citizen of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to try your very best to realize your potential and to develop yourself and our country. It is the only way that we could positively move forward. I also reiterate my call for prayer and thanksgiving on Republic Day.

Trinidad and Tobago, may God continue to bless our nation. Do have a safe and enjoyable Republic Day.