

**Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the  
Caribbean on Sustainable Development  
15 – 18 April 2024 | Santiago, Chile**

**Caribbean panel – Advancing the priorities of Caribbean SIDS  
towards achieving the 2030 Agenda from 9– 10:30 a.m.**

Thank you, Dianne.

Buenos Días colegas, muchas gracias por esta invitación. *[I hope my Spanish was good].*

In the face of unique challenges and vulnerabilities, Caribbean SIDS stand at a crucial juncture in our quest for sustainable development, requiring concerted efforts and innovative strategies to propel us forward towards a resilient and prosperous future.

It is against this backdrop that my presentation will focus on four (4) key areas that are part of this quest and demonstrate the efforts and innovative strategies of Trinidad and Tobago toward achieving sustainable development.

## **1. Climate Change**

Trinidad and Tobago, as a small island developing state, is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards. Despite being a hydro-carbon dependent economy, the country's global carbon footprint, measured by the greenhouse gas emission, is less than one percent of the worldwide emissions.

Trinidad and Tobago understands its responsibilities within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement and remains committed to making progress on the climate change agenda. We have developed

- a national climate change policy to guide climate action which is being updated;
- a carbon reduction strategy;
- detailed inventories of greenhouse gas emissions with measures for emissions reduction;
- a functional measurement, reporting and verification system for greenhouse gas emissions; and

- a national adaptation plan detailing strategies and actions for resilience building and integration.

## **2. Green and Sustainable Energy Transition**

Green and Sustainable Energy Transition, especially green energy, has been a core policy area for Trinidad and Tobago as part of the country's ambitious diversification agenda. Consequently, the government has taken steps towards setting Ambitious Renewable Energy Targets along with projects for implementation. As an example, Trinidad and Tobago has set targets to increase the share of renewable energy in its energy mix. Several renewable energy projects have been initiated through the National Energy Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago that is focused on achieving the target of 30% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, through solar PV and wind (offshore and onshore) energy electricity generation.

The challenge to transition to low carbon development will be significant for Trinidad and Tobago. However, we are up to the task. We have incentivised private sector investment into establishing and fully financing a green hydrogen facility. Progress on this initiative is ongoing.

Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago is currently implementing the largest grant funded national project under the global environmental facility entitled "Energy Efficiency through the development of low carbon refrigeration and air conditioning technologies in Trinidad and Tobago". This four year project which began in 2020 aims at creating a sustained market change towards the adoption of low carbon RAC Technologies and utilizes a public-private partnership approach.

## **3. Digital Transformation, Innovation and Data Strengthening Solutions**

Since 2020, digitisation has been on the national development agenda for Trinidad and Tobago for Accelerated Technology Transfer to arrest the widening digital divide. We established a Ministry of Digital Transformation who developed the Digital Transformation Strategy for 2023 to 2026 which focuses on: • a digital society which is people centered and knowledge based focused on access, skills, participation (inclusion) and connected communities; • a digital

economy driven by value creation, supporting ICT sector growth, and improving access to markets; and • a digital government led by public value creation through efficiency in service delivery and citizen-centric approach. The strategy document is out for public review and input.

A key priority for Caribbean SIDS would be innovation and specifically, innovative solutions for closing the digital and data divide. This would require

- optimal investments in research and development,
- collaboration between academia and industry,
- adequate governance arrangements and coordination,
- strong innovation readiness of organizations and institutions, and
- sufficient application of research for solutions.

To effect all this, the government in collaboration with key stakeholders are currently developing a draft Innovation Policy for Trinidad and Tobago. A key component of this Policy is the establishment of centers of excellence to manage the innovation ecosystem across sectors and boost their innovative capabilities.

Data strengthening solutions help support and contribute to resilience building, policy formulation, resource management and international cooperation in SIDS. For Trinidad and Tobago, this solution was in the form of a *Joint SDG Fund Project* undertaken by the UN Country Team, for “Modernising Trinidad and Tobago’s Statistical Ecosystems. One of the key outputs of this project is an interactive SDG Data Repository online platform that will bring together data from various datasets, portals and sectors to one common place that will enable the government to track its progress towards achieving the SDGs. This platform has the potential to also expand its scope to include a subsection on SIDS-related data and statistics that will facilitate reporting on the implementation of the new programme of action for SIDS.

#### **4. Strengthening Institutional Outputs**

Finally, consideration must be given to the institutional mechanism that will support the implementation of the new programme of action for SIDS. Not only the institutional structure, but the outputs that it will produce and outcomes it will realise. Therefore, strengthening institutional outputs must involve improving the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of inputs, activities and resources. Some strategies are clearly defining goals and objectives, streamlining workflows and optimizing processes, investing in training and capacity building,

leveraging technology to automate tasks, improve data management and enhance collaboration, implement quality assurance measures, promoting collaboration and communication and building into the system monitoring and evaluation indicators for continuous improvement. Trinidad and Tobago is working on building these strategies into the restructuring of its technical coordinating secretariat that will have responsibility for the new programme of action for SIDS.

In conclusion, as we are mere weeks away from the 4th international conference on SIDS, and this being the last decade for us to get it right, Trinidad and Tobago is committing to supporting efforts to advance regional priorities and the sustainable development of small island developing states.

Gracias.

**Presented by**  
**Kennethia Douglas**  
**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**