



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Planning and Development

**EIGHTH MEETING OF THE FORUM OF THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

31 March – 4 April, 2025 | Santiago, Chile

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO COUNTRY STATEMENT

PANELLIST STATEMENT

WEDNESDAY, 2 APRIL 2025 | 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Advancing Caribbean development through greater synergy in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (ABAS)

Trinidad and Tobago’s plans and early actions to ensure that the implementation of the ABAS is catalysed by underscoring the advantage of synergized implementation of the ABAS and the 2030 Agenda in advancing Caribbean sustainable development.

Thank you, Minister Greene. Good afternoon, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentleman. I bring greetings from the Honourable Penelope Beckles, Minister of Planning and Development of Trinidad and Tobago and Chair of the 30th Session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, who unfortunately is unable participate in this panel discussion today due to other commitments as our country will soon conduct a general election at the end of this month. The Minister’s sincere regrets are extended.

Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its commitment to the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Small Island Developing States continue to navigate complex challenges, including climate change, economic vulnerabilities, and social inequalities, which demand targeted and coordinated action. Hence, Trinidad and Tobago views the ABAS as a crucial opportunity to refine our approach to sustainable development. As highlighted throughout the fourth SIDS Conference, the ABAS allows us to identify and address the implementation gaps of the SAMOA Pathway, setting a clearer course for the next decade. There is the space for leveraging existing frameworks that already address sustainable development while ensuring stronger implementation across all sectors.

The ABAS’ seamless alignment to the global frameworks presents an opportunity to streamline processes, reduce the reporting burden, and enhance efficiency in tracking

progress. We are working to achieve this by fostering greater synergies between mechanisms, creating a more integrated and effective approach to achieving national goals. We know that data and statistics has and continues to be a problem which impacts reporting obligations. With this in mind, Trinidad and Tobago is prepared to ensure that we have a robust data system enhancing transparency and accessibility, through integration of the targets and indicators for the ABAS (when they become available) into our SDGs Data Repository online platform that is currently being configured for operationalisation.

At times, progress can feel slow, especially working to advance initiatives through governmental processes. However, we remain committed to our objectives at all levels, ensuring that by 2026, Trinidad and Tobago is well-prepared to conduct a comprehensive Voluntary National Review (VNR). One of the key lessons from our first VNR was not only the challenge of data gaps but also gaps in institutional mechanisms—not just for the SDGs but for the broader sustainable development agenda, including SIDS.

While national priorities, expectations, and government structures may sometimes delay progress, we are focused on keeping momentum. A key takeaway from the SIDS4 Conference and the adoption of ABAS is the underlying tone on the importance of course correction. One critical improvement we intend to make in our next VNR is the inclusion of a dedicated chapter on SIDS, outlining how we are implementing the ABAS, the structures we are putting in place, and our approach to its long-term execution.

At this juncture, Trinidad and Tobago's priorities are clear: we are building a strong institutional framework that provides comprehensive coverage across all the sustainable development agendas and frameworks and intentionally addressing the data gaps. We know the challenges, and we understand the gaps and are working deliberately towards where we want to be in the next decade by taking decisive steps to get there, now.

Of course, we wish progress could happen faster, but we must face the realities of external shocks, the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing economic instability and climate change, that always forces us to reassess and re-strategise. However, by strengthening institutional mechanisms and ensuring our data systems are resilient to such disruptions, we hope to make meaningful progress. With this approach, Trinidad and Tobago is securing national long-term, impactful outcomes on the sustainable development journey.

Finally, I want to emphasise and admonish us on this: the ABAS is a 10-year programme—it does not end with the SDGs in 2030. Let us not repeat the same mistake of the SAMOA Pathway when the SDGs were adopted. We must resist the tendency to focus solely on what comes next after the 2030 Goals and instead ensure sustained implementation throughout the full lifecycle of the ABAS.

Thank you.

Delivered By
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