



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 STATEMENTS

THURSDAY, 3 APRIL 2025 | 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

[Peer Learning Sessions, Panel 4: Goal 14 – Life below water](#)

Trinidad and Tobago's progress on SDG 14

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, good afternoon. I thank the panellists for their perspectives. I wish to share my country's own progress on implementing SDG 14.

Trinidad and Tobago, a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), is home to 704 kilometres of coastline and a maritime territory that is 15 times greater than its land area. Our nation's prosperity has long been intertwined with our ocean and coastal resources, yet these vital ecosystems face relentless degradation.

Recognizing this, the UN's Open-Ended Working Group has outlined ten targets under SDG 14, addressing the conservation and sustainable use of our oceans and marine resources. However, some targets remain aspirational due to the lack of timeframes, clear quantifications or measurable data. Despite these challenges, Trinidad and Tobago has made notable strides in advancing SDG 14.

The 2024 SDG Status Report highlights that while progress has stagnated in protecting certain marine biodiversity sites, our nation has taken significant action to safeguard marine life. Since 2014, full legal protection has been extended to all five species of marine turtles, earning Trinidad and Tobago global recognition for its conservation efforts. Building on this, the National Sea Turtle Task Force was established in 2021 to oversee research and conservation activities. This collaborative body, comprising government entities, academia and dedicated NGOs, has recently prepared a draft Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan to address pressing threats and knowledge gaps.

In August 2023, Trinidad and Tobago's Cabinet approved the National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Policy Framework alongside a 10-year action plan. This ecosystem-based

approach is guiding the sustainable management of marine areas, particularly in the Gulf of Paria. Concurrently, Trinidad and Tobago has embarked on projects to build a sustainable blue economy, emphasizing maritime industries, ecotourism, and mariculture.

A promising initiative in blue carbon credit design, launched in 2024, seeks to promote natural capital management while offering livelihood opportunities and generating revenue. Efforts to restore coastal ecosystems—such as coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves—have also commenced through public-private partnerships. Furthermore, the proposed North-East Tobago Marine Protected Area, spanning 68,384 hectares, represents a significant step in expanding our protected marine zones, especially on that island.

Our commitment to reducing marine pollution is evident through our longstanding accession to the Cartagena Convention and the LBS Protocol. Through a technical cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Institute of Marine Affairs received equipment and training to enhance its capacity for testing pollutants—such as nutrients, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, and microplastics—as well as monitoring phenomena like ocean acidification.

Despite these achievements, challenges persist. While Trinidad and Tobago acceded to the FAO's Port State Measures Agreement in 2019, the integration of these commitments into national legislation remains a work in progress. The modernization of our fisheries legislative and institutional frameworks is ongoing but hampered by the complexity of policy and legislative processes.

To fully achieve SDG 14 by 2030, immense political will, innovative financing and strengthened institutional frameworks are essential. Trinidad and Tobago recognizes that effective conservation of coastal and marine resources is vital not only for economic sustainability but also for the well-being of our people and the health of our planet.

As we look to the future, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to sustainable development, ensuring that our oceans and marine resources continue to thrive for generations to come.

Thank you.

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