

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR
ANNUAL STUDENTS' CHRISTMAS RECEPTION
FRIDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2010**

- On behalf of the President and the Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to welcome all you students attending this annual reception for nationals of Trinidad and Tobago studying in the United Kingdom here at the Mission.

- I imagine it is always a pleasure for the High Commission to host the function for our students. I remember being hosted as a student myself. But it is my special pleasure to host you as my first official reception at the High Commission.

- For new students, it is hoped that your first semester in the United Kingdom was an enjoyable and enriching one despite the challenges and myriad changes you would have encountered inclusive of the weather. For those who may be coming to the end of your programme, it is hoped that you would leave with fond memories of the UK. The Mission wishes you every success as you move forward and it is my hope that you would use your experience and knowledge to improve Trinidad and Tobago as well as yourselves.

- It is noteworthy that the wide range of disciplines being studied is crucial to the development of Trinidad and Tobago; from medicine, law and social sciences to engineering, the arts and natural sciences, all these disciplines equip you with the requisite skills to drive the development process in our beloved country. Thus, as you are now seized of this new found knowledge, I wish to strongly encourage all students to return to Trinidad and Tobago upon completion of your studies. Your country needs you.

- You students can play a very influential role in the advancement of your nation. You could be regarded as Trinidad and Tobago's academic and cultural ambassadors as you fly our flag in the universities you attend. You expose the rest of the world to the academic brilliance and cultural melting pot that represents Trinidad and Tobago. Nationals have frequently set very high academic standards and the onus is upon existing students to continue in this tradition. The High Commission is also aware of student efforts in bringing glimpses of our cultural diversity, inclusive of Carnival and the many other national festivals and observances to your universities, such efforts are certainly to be encouraged.

- I wish to remind you all that the High Commission is here to facilitate your studies in the United Kingdom so you should continue to keep in contact with the Mission and advise of any developments where the Mission's assistance is required. In addition, you should advise the Mission of any changes in address/contact information so that we can continue to communicate with you.

- I am particularly pleased with the number of students attending the reception especially in this weather as it is an indication of the continuing positive relationship between the High Commission and you our nationals. This reception provides an opportunity for all students, old and new, to network, share coping measures and to form lasting friendships. It also provides both the Mission's staff and students with the opportunity to put names to faces. Finally, despite being in a very cold city, it gives us an opportunity to celebrate this Christmas season together in a true "Trini" way.

- I take this opportunity to wish each and everyone a Happy Christmas and a prosperous and productive New Year.