



HIGH COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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Speech by High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas – Vin d'honneur – February 10th, 2011, Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London

- Mr. Charles Gray, Marshall of the Diplomatic Corps
- Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners
- Heads of International Organizations
- Baroness Benjamin
- Representatives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Specially invited Friends
- Members of the family of the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission and to bring greetings on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on this very special occasion.

Today you, my new friends, celebrate with me the official commencement of my tenure as High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the Court of St. James's.

I am delighted to see so many of my colleagues from CARICOM, Latin American, the Commonwealth and indeed the wider diplomatic community here today.



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As you are aware, I am charged with the responsibility of strengthening the excellent bilateral relations which exist between the United Kingdom and my country.

It is also incumbent upon me to strengthen our bilateral relations with those countries to which this Mission is accredited being Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

In addition, I look forward to working closely with all of you as the Mission seeks to position Trinidad and Tobago as the gateway to the Americas and as a melting pot for trade and tourism investment.

Many of you may know us for our world famous Carnival, for our steelpan, and our calypso. Others may know us for our oil and natural gas and our world famous asphalt, which I understand has even been used to pave some of the roads in London. Not many however, may yet know us for our eco-tourism our cultural tourism, or our mouth-watering cuisine!

In this regard I am especially keen to explore new initiatives and to increase awareness of all that my country has to offer.



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As Trinidad and Tobago prepares to hand over the mantle of Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth to Australia at the next CHOGM to be held in Perth in October, I wish to emphasise that we attach great significance to our membership of the Commonwealth and to the guiding principles of democracy and good governance.

Trinidad and Tobago also sees great value in the work carried out not only by the Secretariat but by many other Commonwealth organisations in promoting development and good governance throughout the Commonwealth.

For this reason, Trinidad and Tobago has agreed to host a Caribbean Investment Forum in June which is being organised in partnership with the Commonwealth Business Council and the Council of the Americas.

This Forum will focus on emerging market trends within the Caribbean and the Americas and is aimed at the further development of partnerships between Latin America and the Commonwealth to the mutual benefit of all.

I am excited to be in London at this time. While this year the focus will be on the CHOGM and of course the Royal Wedding, next year will mark two very significant anniversaries, both for the United Kingdom and for Trinidad and Tobago, namely the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and Trinidad and Tobago's 50th anniversary of Independence.



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As you know 2012 will also see London assuming centre stage as host of the Olympics.

I am sure therefore that you will agree with me that London is definitely the place to be.

I hope that I have stimulated your interest in learning more about Trinidad and Tobago. I hope that over the next couple years I will be able to expand that interest as our nations develop closer ties.

As for today, I say thank you for showing your support by being here.

And it is with pleasure that I now invite you to join me in commemorating today's special occasion by raising a toast to Her Majesty the Queen.

The Queen!