



Media Release

COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN CONSULTATION

May 12, 2016:- Mr. Norris Herbert, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry delivered the Keynote Address at the Commonwealth Caribbean Consultation on Recent Developments in Trade: Post-Nairobi and Regional Integration on Thursday 12 May, 2016 at the Hyatt Regency.

Speaking to the Commonwealth Secretariat and CARICOM representatives, Acting PS Herbert reminisced that ***'six months ago in December of 2015 in Nairobi, we were also able to secure, what some has described as an "historic agreement" on Agriculture Export Competition. Members took the decision to eliminate the use of agriculture export subsidies and the imposition of disciplines on other trade distorting export support measures. This has been pursued by developing countries for many years. We are certainly encouraged by this outcome.'***

Mr. Herbert took the opportunity to express two areas of issues for which Trinidad and Tobago would like to highlight for discussions. He said ***'we consider the rise of the BRICS, a major challenge in the context of progress at the WTO particularly the Chinese economy and their standoff with the US. That relationship has adversely impacted developing countries and will continue to adversely impact us in the near future. Trinidad and Tobago therefore considers the proposal for the establishment of an independent category of 'small vulnerable economies' as useful to overcome the issue. We would like to see this be made a priority issue for the post Nairobi work programme.'*** He added that ***'non-tariff measures and other barriers, more so than tariffs, are major market access barriers for Trinidad and Tobago. They frustrate the businessman and the policy maker alike because of the difficulties involved in identifying and appropriately treating with them. Trinidad and Tobago also considers this issue a high priority for post Nairobi.'***

Her Excellency Ambassador Gail Mathurin thanked the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for hosting the two day meeting and said that she looked forward to the fruitful discussions and concrete outcomes.

Dr. Mohammad Razzaque, Commonwealth Secretariat, London in his Remarks stated that ***'the presence of all CARICOM representatives is indeed testimony to the importance the Caribbean attaches to the multilateral trading system and the regional trade integration process. Trinidad and Tobago and other Caribbean countries have played a proactive role in supporting the multilateral trading system while promoting trade and economic integration in the region'***

The two-day consultation involved discussions on the Nairobi Package of the WTO; Trade and Development Priorities in the WTO: Caribbean; the Post-Nairobi Process and the Future of the Doha Round; Harnessing External Trade Partnerships for the Caribbean's Integration and CARICOM Integration: Prospects and Challenges.