



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Inaugural InterCaribbean Airways Flight to Port of Spain, Trinidad

Remarks

Senator the Honourable Satyakama Maharaj
Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism

Sunday 8th March, 2026

Salutations

- The Honourable Davendranath Tancoo - Minister of Finance
- The Honourable Nicholas Morris – Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister
- Dr. Colin Neil Gosine - Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism
- Dr. Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit - High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- Dr. Vaalmikki Arjoon – President, and Directors of the T&T-India Business Federation
- Dr. Sieunarine Coosal - Executive Chairman, Coosal's Group of Companies
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Distinguished Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Tonight, we gather to mark more than the arrival of an aircraft.

We gather to mark the strengthening of a bridge between Caribbean people. We gather to mark the opening of another corridor of movement, exchange, and possibility within our region.

And we gather to celebrate a development that is important not only for aviation, but for tourism, trade, investment, and the wider project of Caribbean advancement.

The inaugural InterCaribbean Airways service connecting Grantley Adams International Airport in Barbados directly to Piarco International Airport is more than the launch of a new route, it is a statement of confidence. Confidence in our region, in our people, and in the future of Caribbean connectivity.

Strengthening Regional Connectivity

For too long, one of the great frustrations of our region has been that although we are neighbours by geography, history, and culture, we have not always been neighbours by ease of movement. That is why this inaugural flight matters.

InterCaribbean Airways has presented a solution. From its beginnings in 1991 with a single Cessna aircraft, to its evolution into the region's largest inter island carrier, the company has consistently demonstrated vision, resilience, and a deep commitment to Caribbean integration.

This launch strengthens the bridge between Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, two nations with shared history, shared values, and shared aspirations. This direct service will make it easier for families to reunite, for students to travel, for entrepreneurs to build partnerships, and for visitors to explore the richness of our cultures. It makes the Caribbean smaller in the best possible way. It reduces distance. It expands opportunity.

Advancing Tourism, Trade and Investment

This new service is also significant from the standpoint of economic strategy.

Airlift is not a peripheral matter. Airlift is development infrastructure.

Where there is reliable connectivity, tourism expands.

Where there is reliable connectivity, trade becomes easier.

Where there is reliable connectivity, business relationships deepen, investment discussions move faster, and regional commerce becomes more practical.

For our business community, this service means faster, more predictable movement across a key regional corridor.

Increased intra-Caribbean airlift is especially important for Trinidad and Tobago because it strengthens our position as a high-value, experience-rich destination. With easier regional access, more Caribbean travellers can discover the depth of what we offer our world-class festivals, our unmatched culinary landscape, our thriving creative sector, and our expanding portfolio of medical tourism, sport tourism, eco-visits, and food-and-culture experiences.

Greater connectivity allows us to bring more of that Trinidad and Tobago story to the region.

It allows more Caribbean travelers to experience our festivals, our food, our music, our hospitality, and the distinct character of our twin-island republic. It creates opportunities for shorter-stay, higher-frequency regional travel. It supports hotels, transportation providers, restaurants, tour operators, event promoters, artisans, and small and medium-sized enterprises across the tourism value chain.

That is the multiplier effect of connectivity.

In this way, improved connectivity becomes a catalyst for sustainable growth, diversification, and a more vibrant, competitive tourism sector

A Model of Partnership

The Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism and the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation have worked closely with the Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, InterCaribbean Airways, and our respective partners to make this service a reality. This achievement reflects the strength of collaboration across government and industry.

I wish to recognise the steadfast work of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation under the leadership of Minister Eli Zakour.

His team has been instrumental in advancing the regulatory, operational, and technical frameworks that make new air services like this possible. Their commitment to strengthening Trinidad and Tobago's aviation ecosystem through modernisation, safety enhancement, and strategic route development has created the enabling environment that allows partnerships such as this one with InterCaribbean Airways to flourish.

And may I also acknowledge Chairman Aaron Henry and the Airports Authority team for their leadership in ensuring that Piarco International Airport continues to operate as a modern, competitive, and passenger focused hub for the region.

A Caribbean Airline with a Caribbean Vision

InterCaribbean's story is one of ambition and regional pride. From its early days as InterIsland Airways, to its expansion as Air Turks & Caicos, to its rebranding in 2013 as InterCaribbean Airways, the company has consistently pushed the boundaries of what Caribbean aviation can be.

Today, with a growing fleet that includes Embraer jets, ATR aircraft, and a network that spans more cities than any other regional carrier, InterCaribbean is helping to knit our islands together in ways that strengthen our collective future.

We welcome this partnership. We welcome this investment. And we welcome the opportunities it brings for our people.

Tonight's inaugural flight is a step forward, one that aligns with our national strategy to enhance connectivity, deepen regional cooperation, and create an environment where commerce, culture, and community can thrive.

To the leadership and team of InterCaribbean Airways: thank you for choosing Trinidad and Tobago. We look forward to a long, productive, and mutually beneficial relationship.

To our partners across the region: let this be a reminder that when we work together, we can build a Caribbean that is more connected, more competitive, and more prosperous.

And to the passengers on tonight's inaugural flight: welcome to Trinidad and Tobago. We are delighted to have you here. May this route soar, may our partnership deepen, and may the Caribbean continue to rise together.

Thank you and enjoy the evening.