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Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

ATTN: News Editor

**Trinidad and Tobago remains a willing partner on  
Counterterrorism with the United States**

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago warmly welcomes the 2017 Country Report on Terrorism for Trinidad and Tobago released by the Department of State of the United States of America on September 19, 2018. The report covers the period January 1 – December 31, 2017 and provides an assessment of the progress our country made up to that point in time with respect to the global fight against violent extremism and the risks posed to Trinidad and Tobago by terrorism. Though the report only summarizes a few areas of Trinidad and Tobago's progress, its highlights include:

- The adoption of a comprehensive National Counter Terrorism Strategy;
- Strengthening of our border security by the execution of the Memorandum of Intent to provide for the installation of the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) at certain points of entry;
- Legislative and administrative steps to reform the criminal justice system particularly in plea discussion and plea agreement, improving access to bail and new criminal proceeding rules, de-clogging the courts thereby leading to more timely prosecutions;
- Training of law enforcement and intelligence officers in combatting terrorism and the financing of terrorism;
- The quantum leap taken by the Office of the Attorney General in applying targeted financial sanctions against domestic and international terrorists and terrorist organizations. The listing of over 350 individuals and entities is a milestone achievement taking into consideration that prior to November 2015 the Anti-Terrorism Act remained untouched and unutilized. The report notes the steps taken by the Office of the Attorney General to apply targeted financial sanctions internationally, both by successfully proposing one individual to be added to the United Nations 1267 list and the designation of individuals

by other countries pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1373 upon a reference from our country. This, together with the report, spotlights the pivotal role of Trinidad and Tobago in CARICOM as the lead in addressing crime and security and acknowledges our country's significant contribution to regional security; and

- Sourcing and allocating increased physical and human resources to law enforcement and intelligence agencies, including the Financial Intelligence Unit, increasing their ability to respond to the threats posed by terrorism and the financing of terrorism.

The report is testimony to the remarkable pace of progress by our country in strengthening the overall framework for protection and prevention, response to and recovery from terrorism including terrorist financing. This must be considered in the context of the fact that the report reflects our position up to December 31, 2017, a mere two months after Trinidad and Tobago embarked upon an agreed action plan with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which includes the regime governing terrorism and terrorist financing.

Trinidad and Tobago has since then continued to make tremendous strides. These include:

- operationalizing the National Counter Terrorism Strategy through *inter-alia*:
  - Establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committee and sub-committees to guide the national response as the international fight against terrorism revolutionizes;
  - Advancing the CT/CVE legislative agenda including on the areas of the abuse of non-profit organizations for terrorist financing and strengthening anti-terrorism legislation;
  - Significant progress towards development of a Prevention/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) national action plan. Implementation of various elements of a P/CVE approach has in fact already commenced by several entities; and
  - Progress on the development of a Counter Terrorism Operational Plan commensurate with the outlined strategic objectives of the National CT Strategy.
- The Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2018 has been enacted and is now in force as of August 20, 2018. Implementation has already commenced with orders of the High Court under Section 22B having been obtained against four (4) individuals, declaring them as listed entities, freezing their assets and restricting their access to the financial system. Further, the amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act, Chap. 12:07 now criminalize providing financial and other support to all 362 listed entities and introduce a host of other new offences including traveling for terrorist purposes. This legislation addresses all the gaps that previously existed regarding our country's compliance with the FATF Standards.
- Pursuant to a request from and evidence provided by Trinidad and Tobago, one jurisdiction has now designated two individuals in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1373, freezing their assets. This, together with the addition of one individual to the UN Security Council 1267 list pursuant to a proposal from our country, demonstrates our

continued commitment to working with international partners in maintaining the global standard for counter terrorism and countering the financing of terrorism.

These steps are part of Government's comprehensive strategy for addressing threats to the safety and security of our citizens and our economy and establish the foundation for ever-increasing confidence of the global financial community in its engagement with Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad and Tobago is already ahead of schedule in key aspects of its FATF action plan and in October 2018 we will account for our progress to date at the FATF Plenary. The Government's aggressive legislative and effectiveness agenda also address obligations under the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes placing the country well ahead of our 2018-2019 schedule.

Many of these milestones have also been achieved through collaboration with our international partners including the United States with the joint goal of protecting international peace and security and the integrity of the global financial system of which Trinidad and Tobago is a part. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago, together with key public and private sector stakeholders, remains committed to fully addressing the risks posed by terrorism and terrorist financing and in this regard welcomes the continued support of the United States and our international partners.

**END**

Dated: September 19<sup>th</sup> 2018