



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Media Release

Statement by the Honourable Attorney General on the 2018 U.S International Narcotics Control Strategy Report

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago notes the release of the United States International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) 2018 which covers the 2017 calendar year and in particular those sections in Volumes I and II of the Report dealing with Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the strong recognition in the Report of the commitment of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago to tackling narcotics-trafficking and money laundering. Volume I of the Report recognizes our considerable progress in the fight against illegal narcotics in 2017 with continued robust interdiction efforts together with the Government's continued focus on drug demand reduction.

As stated in Volume II of the Report, inclusion is not an indication that a jurisdiction is not making strong efforts to combat money laundering nor is it any form of blacklisting of our country. The report in fact recognizes the significant steps taken by Government **in 2017** including the priority given by the Office of the Attorney General & Legal Affairs to critical legislation to address deficiencies in our Anti-Money Laundering framework. The Report notes the enactment of new legislation to reduce fraud, corruption and money laundering, govern public procurement, and to reform the criminal justice system to allow for more timely prosecutions. Volume II correctly points to the fact that other critical pieces of legislation are currently in train, including amendments relating to beneficial ownership of companies; increasing transparency for real property held in trust, non-conviction based asset forfeiture, gambling and betting; and whistleblowers.

The Report highlights the allocation of resources to key institutions such as the Financial Intelligence Unit and improved interagency processes to both assess money laundering risks and increase cooperation to investigate and prosecute money laundering crimes more effectively, even in light of severe economic constraints. It recognises that Trinidad and Tobago has completed a national risk assessment to better identify risks and vulnerabilities and has an Action Plan to work towards making improvements in areas such as international cooperation, legal entity transparency and beneficial ownership, prosecuting money laundering, and tracing and confiscating criminal

assets. These measures are part of a comprehensive programme in order to effectively strengthen our country's legislative framework, law enforcement and intelligence infrastructure and the justice system. Successes in revolutionizing the Family Court Division of the Supreme Court are now being replicated in the Criminal Division and District Criminal and Traffic Courts Division and the Anti-Gang legislation currently before the Senate. Together with this, the introduction of the Criminal Procedure Rules and the development of a National Prosecution Service and a Public Defenders' Office will see a quantum leap in the administration of the criminal justice sector.

The Report accurately reflects the continued commitment of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to address these national and international security risks, particularly through collaboration with our international partners. We will continue to press forward with our legislative agenda to plug all existing gaps in the law and to provide a platform for law enforcement authorities to effectively tackle drug related crime and related money laundering.

END

Dated: April 7th 2018