



SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE HONOURABLE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THE 5TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATE PARTIES FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Protocols:

Mr. / Madam President

Fellow Parliamentary Representatives from member States

Other high-level Representatives of member States

Officials of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Members of the International Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction:

Trinidad and Tobago is very pleased to be participating at this 5th session of the Conference of States Parties and I wish to express our sincere

gratitude to the UNODC and the Government of Panama for its very warm welcome.

1. Transnational Crime Significance to T&T

As we are all aware, the concept of corruption and the sphere of corrupt activities continue to grow like a rapidly aggressive cancer within our societies. With the insertion of advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the phenomenon of a global community, this is a reality that all States face.

Trinidad and Tobago and by extension, the Caribbean is subject to a peculiar situation, in that, our geographical location strategically situates us between North and South America. This location allows Trinidad and Tobago to be the beneficiary of many positive economic, political and social relationships, but also makes us vulnerable to all kinds of transnational criminal activity which may engage individuals, organised criminal entities and even large corporations.

2. Institutional and legislative framework to combat corruption

It is because of these vulnerabilities, that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains sensitive to the need to address the issues of corruption that are present both within and even outside our own borders.

The institutional and legislative framework to combat corruption in Trinidad and Tobago exists at the international, regional and domestic level. Trinidad and Tobago is party to several international conventions on corruption as well as multilateral and bilateral treaties concerning extradition and mutual legal assistance. Within our domestic system, legislation has established various investigative bodies to deal with matters of corruption that exist within both the public sector and private sector entities. In addition, Parliament has enacted legislation that criminalises various offences under UNCAC such as money laundering. On a regional level, Trinidad and Tobago is a member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) which is an organisation of states and territories of the Caribbean basin that have agreed to implement common anti-money laundering measures.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago admits that while these anti-corruption measures exist, there remains an urgent need to further strengthen this machinery with a view to closing the gaps and mending the

systemic flaws that plague the operations within the public and private sectors.

3. The UNCAC review process self-assessment/ country visit / executive summary/ and important recommendations

From 2012 to 2013, the Office of the Attorney General was engaged in the completion of Trinidad and Tobago's self-assessment checklist under the UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism. This was followed by a Country Visit in September 2013 and as such the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to announce the successful completion of its first review under the Implementation Review Mechanism and the publication of the Executive Summary to the Full Report. On behalf of my Government, I would like to commend the officials at UNODC and the experts from Argentina and Palau for their guidance and efficiency in completing the review.

Based on the comprehensive and involved nature of the review process, the Government notes with appreciation the recommendations received for further strengthening our anti-corruption framework. The completed self-assessment checklist allows for Trinidad and Tobago to holistically view its

measures and mechanisms with a view to mapping a way forward and advancing our efforts in combating corruption.

Of particular note is the recommendation to consider legislation to allow for the Convention to be used as a legal basis for extradition and mutual legal assistance, in the absence of a treaty. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is willing to consider this recommendation for the purpose of more effectively dealing with matters of extradition and mutual legal assistance with other States Parties with whom Trinidad and Tobago does not presently have an existing treaty.

4. Accessing technical assistance re: procurement legislation and political campaign financing legislation.

On the issue of technical assistance, Trinidad and Tobago is very keen on working with other States Parties and the UNODC in accessing technical assistance. A priority area for the Government is drafting legislation on public procurement and developing laws and regulations with respect to political campaign financing.

It is well known that the intricate relationships formed between public and private actors, if not monitored, can be a breeding ground for corrupt activities and can extend from the lowest to the highest level of authority.

Trinidad and Tobago is not immune from these types of relationships and in this regard the Government is grateful for the assistance of the UNODC in these areas.

5. Thanking the UNODC team / looking forward to second cycle of review Chapters

Having been reviewed under the first cycle as it relates to chapter III on Criminalisation and Law Enforcement and chapter IV on International Cooperation, Trinidad and Tobago now looks forward to the second cycle of review on chapter II as it relates to Preventive Measures and chapter V on Asset Recovery. As regards the issues under preventive measures, my Government has noted with interest the possibilities of a voluntary self-assessment under chapter II as this closely relates to the Government's focus on developing legislation on public procurement and will be instructive in this process.

On this note I would like to thank UNODC and our host country Panama for facilitating these discussions and I look forward to engaging constructively with other delegations in continuing the dialogue and taking forward these important issues on combating corruption.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL ANAND RAMLOGAN SC
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**