



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DENNIS FRANCIS,

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS,

DURING THE PLENARY OF THE

UNITED NATIONS 2023 WATER CONFERENCE

General Assembly Hall

United Nations Headquarters, New York

24 March 2023

Excellencies,

On behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend congratulations to the Governments of Tajikistan and the Netherlands, on their election as Co-Presidents of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference. We are grateful for their astute leadership in presiding over these important deliberations to accelerate the implementation of the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including SDG 6.

Forty-five years ago, in Mar del Plata, Argentina, the international community recognised that it will not be possible “to ensure a better quality of life and promote human dignity and happiness” unless specific and concerted action is taken to find solutions for the accelerated and orderly administration of water resources. That policy approach rings true today.

Indeed, the global advancement of water issues is long overdue, and now the impacts of climate change and the effects of water scarcity on the poorest and most vulnerable compels the international community to deepen our understanding of the synergies between water and sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity.

Small island developing states, especially those in the Caribbean have found themselves classified as “water scarce” as climate change exacerbates pre-existing structural vulnerabilities whereby long drought conditions and reduced rainfall has placed significant strain on economies, communities and livelihoods.

Under our National Development Strategy, Vision 2030, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is moving with precision and purpose to undertake a massive transformation of the national water sector. Trinidad and Tobago’s recently launched its updated and revised National Integrated Water Resources Management Policy as a guiding instrument that will institute a clear vision and road map for the sustainable management of the country’s water resources. The policy operates in synergy with other national policies and in conformity with international conventions to which Trinidad and Tobago is State Party, recognising that combatting climate change, preventing biodiversity loss and environmental conservation are all inextricably linked to water.

As part of its commitment, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was pleased to host the inaugural Caribbean Water Loss Conference, which was dedicated specifically to discussing strategies, techniques and the application of international best practices to significantly and sustainably reduce water loss. The Conference brought together over 150 participants from across the region.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has also partnered with the Inter-American Development Bank for investment projects to enhance the efficiency and quality of the water supply, improve the operational efficiency and reliability of water supply services, upgrade the quality of water services in underserved communities, and develop capacity and provide institutional strengthening to the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA).

Such support, however, is a drop in the bucket compared to the level of financing required to achieve the water-related targets and objectives. As well over 100 billion dollars is needed annually to achieve SDG 6 between now and 2030, it is therefore imperative to expand international finance, especially for infrastructure, capacity building, information and data, and technology transfer to support developing countries' efforts to achieve a sustainable water supply.

In closing, there is no doubt that water is inextricably linked with the very existence of humanity, and therefore the international community, bound by a single purpose, must work together to deliver on the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda towards safe, secure, resilient, sustainable water and sanitation worldwide.

By implementing sound practices, effective water treatment processes and investments in research and development, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago aims to improve and optimise the allocation and quality of water for present and future generations.

Access to water turns poverty into possibility and together we are going to make every drop count.

I thank you.