



**Statement by Head of the Trinidad and Tobago delegation**

**Presented by**

**The Honourable Nicole Olivierre,  
Minister of Energy and Energy Industries**

**At**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF)**

**Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran**

**November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015**

## **Introduction and Salutations**

- His Excellency , Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
- Distinguished Heads of State and Heads of Government,
- Ministers of Energy and Heads of Delegation
- Distinguished guests.

Many thanks to the Islamic Republic of Iran for the generous hospitality that has been shown to the delegation from Trinidad and Tobago. I bring you warm greetings on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Our Prime Minister, the Honourable Dr. Keith Christopher Rowley, expresses his deepest regrets that he is unable to participate at this prestigious Summit. It is indeed my pleasure to be representing him at the 3<sup>rd</sup> GECF Summit in Tehran. It is also an honour for me as this is my first GECF event and I look forward to building close and mutually beneficial relationships with the Energy Ministers of the Member Countries.

As a long standing member of the GECF, Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to its ideals and objectives and we look forward to our continued collaboration as we grow the forum's capacity and strengthen its level of influence as a valuable and respected voice of the natural gas exporters.

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is one of the oldest petroleum producing and refining countries in the world. Our first oil well was drilled in 1857 and commercial oil production began in the town of La Brea in 1908. Today, one hundred and seven years after that first barrel of commercial oil, Trinidad and Tobago, notwithstanding our small size and small resource base, is world renowned as a highly successful energy-based economy with enviable experience in energy and energy-related activities.

By skillfully exploiting our limited gas reserves, we have created one of the world's most highly diversified gas-commercialisation sectors, which today includes ammonia, methanol, urea, iron and steel and LNG.

Our population is only 1.3 million, yet we have been able to produce numerous highly experienced and knowledgeable professionals, covering all sectors of the oil and gas value chain. We are very proud of the high number of Trinidad and Tobago nationals operating locally, as well as with national and multinational energy companies around the world.

Trinidad and Tobago's success in the development of our petroleum resources has gained international recognition and admiration within the global energy community. The Trinidad and Tobago Model for gas based industrialization is well-respected and sought after by many emerging gas based economies.

The energy sector is the mainstay of our national economy with natural gas based industries representing the largest contributor to our GDP.

Since becoming a member of the GECF in 2003, Trinidad and Tobago has remained an active participant in the Forum. In 2005, it was a privilege for us to host the 5<sup>th</sup> GECF Ministerial Meeting in Port-of-Spain. We had the distinction of holding the Chairmanship of the Executive Board and the Alternate Presidency of the Ministerial Meeting in 2011 when the 1<sup>st</sup> GECF Gas Summit was convened.

Most recently, in October 2015, we hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> Regional Training Workshop of the Joint Organizations Data Initiative. This JODI workshop was attended by representatives from over 20 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as participation from APEC, OLADE, IEF and the IEA.

Trinidad and Tobago is an active participant within regional energy blocs such as the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE). In October 2015, we attended the 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Ministers of OLADE in Tarija, Plurinational State of Bolivia, where we reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening regional energy sovereignty and security, whilst contributing to the pursuit of sustainable development objectives of the region.

In this regard, allow me to again express my appreciation to His Excellency President Morales and the people of Plurinational State of Bolivia for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality extended to our delegation.

During the first week of November 2015, Trinidad and Tobago joined the member states of CARICOM in celebrating CARICOM Energy Week which *provides a regional platform for increased awareness about energy matters, given the critical importance of energy to economic development.* We view the theme of this year's Summit as being in alignment with the development thrust of the many small island developing states that comprise the Caribbean.

In keeping with our willingness to cooperate as member states of the GECF, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have established a bi-lateral framework for the joint exploitation of our cross border gas reserves for the mutual benefit of our peoples.

I acknowledge the support of President Maduro in this venture and give the assurance that our Prime Minister looks forward to a meeting in Caracas to advance our collaboration.

Trinidad and Tobago has and will continue to demonstrate our commitment to cooperation and dialogue on natural gas through bilateral, regional and international mechanisms, while seeking to ensure that gas producing and exporting countries attain maximum benefits from the exploitation of their resources. We welcome opportunities to work jointly with other GECF Member Countries in pursuit of mutually beneficial gas related projects.

As a participant in this 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit of the GECF, Trinidad and Tobago hereby affirms our commitment to promoting Natural Gas as the fuel of choice for sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.