



**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

**STATEMENT BY**

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE JENNIFER BAPTISTE-PRIMUS**

**AT**

**THE**

**107<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE**

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**JUNE 4, 2018**

Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to take the floor today and to bring warm greetings from the Government and from the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed, we are grateful for the opportunity to be represented at the Conference this year and to reinforce global support for the advancement of decent work outcomes and for the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Mr. President, next year, we will finally celebrate the ILO's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019 and indeed, we are happy that the launch of the seven Centenary Initiatives has given constituents the opportunity to directly participate in shaping the way in which the ILO achieves its mandate in the future. We have noted that it is up to constituents to take proactive action, at the national level and through their respective tripartite organisations, as they engage in the implementation of these Initiatives.

I would like to commend the Director-General on such a comprehensive and insightful report on the situation of women at work. Particularly, his

emphasis on pushing for full gender equality should not be overlooked.

It is clear that achieving gender equality in the world of work is not only a human rights issue, but is imperative for sustainable development. It was, no doubt, in recognition of this that world leaders made the decision to place the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a goal on the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Mr. President, given our recent reflections as ILO Constituents on the changing nature of the world of work and as we recognise the collective responsibility of government, workers and employers to mold its future, it is my view that the Report of the Director General represents an opportunity to reflect on the situation of women in the world of work among the member states of the ILO.

The onus will be on Member States to accomplish the global economic empowerment of women. If we want to progress towards securing such a future, we must, among other things - address the under-representation of

women in jobs with better pay; foster and support gender parity in leadership positions; confront all forms of violence and harassment in the workplace; uphold the principle of equal pay for work of equal value; as well as recognise and commit to the reduction of unpaid care work.

Mr. President, the ILO's continued efforts to lead its constituents in the achievement of decent work has no doubt left a mark on the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, which continues to commit to people-centered development and to the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to highlight just a few recent accomplishments of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago:

- Advanced the promotion of the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers through an Integrated Marketing and Communications Campaign using social and traditional media;
- Conducted consultations to review and amend seven pieces of labour legislation, including:
  - Industrial Relations Act, Chapter 88:01;

- Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act, Chapter 88:13;
- Workmen’s Compensation Act, Chapter 88:05;
- Cipriani Labour College Act, Chapter 39:51;
- Occupational Safety and Health Act, Chapter 88:08;
- Basic Terms and Conditions of Work Code;
- Cooperatives Societies Act, Chapter 81:03; and
- Legislation to govern the Private Security Industry.

In fact, our Government is continuing its work on amending labour legislation in Trinidad and Tobago.

- Launched and commenced implementation of the revised National Workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS for Trinidad and Tobago;
- Developed and implemented campaigns aimed towards sensitisation of the public on the rights of Domestic Workers as well as on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago;
- Commenced the development of National Policies on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour and on Labour Migration in Trinidad and Tobago.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean for its unwavering support of our country's decent work initiatives. As a small-island developing state, Trinidad and Tobago, along with other islands in the Caribbean, continues to face economical challenges. Labour market vulnerabilities unique to the region - such as high rates of emigration, job and skills mismatch, low levels of productivity, youth unemployment along with a growing informal sector - and resources constraints, whether they be financial or otherwise, often serve as obstacles to the achievement of the Decent Work Agenda. Indeed, there are hurdles which confront us all, but with national and collective global will, they are certainly not insurmountable.

As we seek to promote and advance our national development goals, Trinidad and Tobago will continue to engage with our partners at the regional, hemispheric and international levels in the interest of supporting partnerships in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda and of course, we will continue to collaborate and share experiences with our fellow Caribbean Community Member States.

I am thoroughly convinced that working **together** is irrefutably, the path towards achieving our shared development objectives.

In closing, I take this opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the promotion of decent work for all.

I thank you.