



**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF LABOUR**

**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN MC CLASHIE,
MINISTER OF LABOUR**

**111th SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION**

Report of the Director-General on Advancing Social Justice

June 13, 2023

Mr. President,

I wish to firstly congratulate the ILO and its constituents for a successful return to the first fully in-person Conference since 2019. I am certainly pleased to be here in Geneva, and it has been an honour to contribute to this year's discussions and to interact with colleagues.

Mr. President, multiple global crises continue to have far-reaching implications for the world of work. It is without a doubt that moving forward will mean leaning on the valuable lessons learned over the last three years if we want to realise a human centred-recovery from the pandemic. For Trinidad and Tobago, we must take full advantage of opportunities for growth; embracing social justice, and ensuring human dignity. This is why I strongly support the Report of the Director-General this year, which I understand is his first. Advancing social justice, during this period of recovery, should remain a top priority if we do seek to safeguard the wellbeing and rights of not only our people today, but for future generations.

Given that the achievement of social justice in practice can appear obscure or even distant, I found it particularly useful that the Report set out key elements to describe its definition, and thereby its application. The Report speaks to four dimensions. They include Universal Human Rights and Capabilities; Equal Access to Opportunities; Fair Distribution; and Just Transitions. The Report also makes it clear that decent work has a critical role in advancing these dimensions. Indeed, the inclusion of decent work and its link to social justice should be reflected in more co-ordinated policies, nationally and globally, which will redound to the benefit of economies, employers and workers everywhere.

Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to promoting decent work and advancing social justice. Our National Development Strategy for 2016 to 2030

provides a framework for the achievement of developed nation status by 2030, and it entails five thematic areas which all reflect the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Theme I on *Putting People First* seeks especially to “ground our society in the principles of social justice”. According to this Strategy, commonly referred to as Vision 2030, “*A society which embodies the principles of social justice pertains to one in which there is the equitable distribution of resources; opportunities for upward mobility are based on merit and achievement; and the rights of citizens are respected and preserved*”. Respect for human dignity is broadly implied in our institutional and legal framework. For instance, there are a number of policies and legislation which currently address non-discrimination and social inclusion in Trinidad and Tobago, and just to name a few, they include: the Equal Opportunity Act, a National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, the Maternity Protection Act and the National Insurance Act.

But Mr. President, Governments alone cannot break down obstructions to advancing social justice; we must engage in a collective process to solve any arising economic or social challenges which affect our citizens. The Report touches on the Global Coalition for Social Justice, the establishment of which is extremely reflective of the importance placed upon strengthening multipartite partnerships and promoting social dialogue, in an effort to ensure that social justice and decent work are prioritised in national and global policymaking.

In closing and on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I reiterate our commitment to achieving a just society for all and I thank you.