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Trinidad and Tobago and European Union hold Bilateral Political Dialogue

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The Honourable Winston Dookeran, Minister of Foreign Affairs, together with Senator the Honourable Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development, Senator the Honourable Vasant Bharath, Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment and Communications, and Senator the Honourable Gary Griffith, Minister of National Security, met with representatives of the European Union (EU) to hold a Bilateral Political Dialogue. The EU was represented by Ms. Daniela Tramacere, Chargé d'Affaires of the European Union Delegation to Trinidad and Tobago, along with the Heads of Mission of EU Member States resident in Trinidad and Tobago: Spain, The Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom; and France. The Dialogue was held in the context of Article 8 (1) of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement, which calls for the Parties to "...regularly engage in a comprehensive, balanced and deep political dialogue, leading to commitments on both sides". The last such Political Dialogue was held on 18th December 2013.

Minister Dookeran opened the discussions by extending condolences to France on the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, in which seventeen (17) persons were killed and others injured. The Minister joined the international community in condemning the acts and expressed the belief that such atrocious acts had brought about a new global resolve in the fight against terror.
Discussions during the dialogue focussed on a comprehensive range of issues including recent political and economic developments in Trinidad and Tobago and the EU, trade and investment, development cooperation and the environment. The critical issue of crime and security in Trinidad and Tobago and the region was highlighted. Human Rights protection and good governance issues were discussed as well.

Participants also discussed collaboration in multilateral Fora including the upcoming CELAC-EU Summit to be held in June 2015. The EU in turn underscored Trinidad and Tobago as one of its most important partners in the Caribbean, stating that it looked forward to a strengthened partnership based on mutual interests and values.

Minister Dookeran highlighted the great strides made regarding the conclusion of a Short-stay Visa Waiver Agreement with the Schengen countries of Europe, with both sides envisaging the finalisation of the Agreement by the first quarter of 2015.

The Honourable Minister recalled the entry into force of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty (UN ATT) on 24th December 2014, and expressed appreciation for support lent on that issue, one which is of utmost importance to Trinidad and Tobago. He expressed his anticipation of support for the country’s bid to host the Secretariat of the ATT, and informed of the upcoming First Preparatory meeting towards the First Conference of States Parties to the UNATT, to be held from 23rd to 24th February in Port of Spain.

Both parties agreed to pursue ongoing dialogue on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues and to hold another Political Dialogue in the near future.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs