



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Finance

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MEDIA RELEASE

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar's Leadership Marks the Return of Confidence and Opportunity

Trinidad and Tobago is once again being led with seriousness, purpose and direction. Through the decisive leadership of the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, our country is once again being regarded with respect, credibility and renewed confidence. Her recent visit to the United States will serve to strengthen investor confidence and support a return to growth and economic momentum.

Investor confidence is strengthened when a country is represented directly, credibly and with purpose at the highest level. Our Prime Minister has restored that standard of representation for Trinidad and Tobago. She has placed this country back in the room, back in serious international conversation, and back in a position to command attention, deepen relationships and create opportunity.

The population is well aware of the decade of neglect, drift and underperformance that Trinidad and Tobago have just endured. It was a period in which too much was allowed to fall apart, too many opportunities were wasted, and too much damage was done to the country's economic strength and standing. That is why the Prime Minister's diplomacy carries economic weight. It signals that Trinidad and Tobago is no longer content to sit quietly while others compete aggressively for investment, influence and market opportunity. It signals that this Government understands that foreign policy must work for the people of this country by supporting growth, investment and national prosperity.

And let us be very clear. This has been achieved through direct leadership, not through the wasteful habits of the past. Public records filed under the United States Foreign Agents Registration Act show that, in 2016, a two (2) year lobbying contract for Trinidad and Tobago in Washington was awarded at a cost of US\$2.4 million, and that arrangement was renewed and carried on over the years. Yet, after years of spending public money and scarce foreign exchange on such services, the country was left with nothing to show for it. That record is shameful. Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, by contrast, has restored international attention to Trinidad and Tobago through her own leadership and credibility

This country has seen before what happens when Kamla Persad-Bissessar leads with purpose. From 2010, Trinidad and Tobago entered a period in which development reached communities across this country and confidence in national leadership was strengthened. Under Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Trinidad and Tobago experienced its strongest period of economic performance, with key indicators reaching peak levels and the country moving forward with confidence, growth and



(868) 612-9700



(868) 627-6189



Comm.finance@gov.tt



www.finance.gov.tt

opportunity. That is why any suggestion that growth, confidence and national advancement are beyond us can only come from those on the other side, because decline is their legacy. Growth and prosperity is our record. We delivered it before under Kamla Persad-Bissessar, and under her leadership it will return again.

What we are now seeing is the beginning of that return. It is the return of a Government that understands that credibility matters. It is the return of a Government that understands that confidence must be earned. It is the return of a Government that is prepared to engage directly, fight for Trinidad and Tobago's interests, and position this country once again as a serious and respected partner.

There are already early signs that this renewed posture is being noticed. Reporting over the weekend indicated that Chevron signalled interest in talks with Trinidad and Tobago within 24 hours of the Prime Minister's meeting with the United States Secretary of Energy. This is a meaningful indication that serious leadership attracts serious attention.

The Prime Minister has shown that she understands the link between diplomacy and development, between international respect and domestic opportunity, and between serious representation abroad and stronger prospects at home. This is the return of Trinidad and Tobago to a path of growth, confidence and national progress. That is the larger significance of this engagement.

After ten (10) years of waste, drift and underperformance, Trinidad and Tobago is once again under leadership that inspires confidence at home and respect abroad. Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar is rebuilding this country's standing, restoring momentum to the economy, and returning Trinidad and Tobago to the path of growth and opportunity it once knew under her leadership.

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The Honourable Davendranath Tancoo
Minister of Finance