



OPENING REMARKS BY

THE HONOURABLE DAVENDRANATH TANCOO, MP

MINISTER OF FINANCE

**MEETING OF THE INTER-MINISTERIAL
COMMITTEE - COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY**

AUGUST 5, 2026

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE COURTYARD

CONFERENCE ROOM

PORT OF SPAIN

Chairman, the Honourable Wayne Sturge, Minister of Defence; Senator the Honourable John Jeremie, Attorney General; the Honourable Roger Alexander, Minister of Homeland Security; the Honourable Sean Sobers, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and the Honourable Devesh Maharaj, Minister of Justice.

Honourable Ministers; Permanent Secretaries; Heads of our National Security Agencies; distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Permit me to begin by thanking the Honourable Minister of Defence for convening this meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Counterterrorism.

When we think about counterterrorism, our minds naturally turn to the Defence Force, the Police Service and our intelligence agencies. Their work remains indispensable to protecting our nation.

However, today's security environment requires us to broaden that perspective.

Modern terrorist organisations and transnational criminal networks rely on financing, exploit international trade, use technology to conceal their activities and seek out weaknesses in our institutions.

Counterterrorism is about strengthening the systems those threats seek to exploit.

That is where the Ministry of Finance plays an important role.

Strong financial systems help prevent money laundering and terrorist financing.

Strong Customs administration protects our borders from illicit trade and transnational organised crime.

Strong regulatory institutions safeguard confidence in our financial system.

Strong governance strengthens national resilience.

One of the most important lessons emerging from the international security environment is that terrorism and organised crime cannot survive without resources. Before an attack is carried out, money must move, goods must cross borders and illicit proceeds must be generated and concealed. If we detect and disrupt those activities early, we reduce the ability of criminal and terrorist organisations to operate.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is for this reason that the Ministry continues to strengthen financial intelligence through the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago, modernise Customs administration and work with international partners to enhance border security and combat organised crime.

Recent discussions with officials from the United States Embassy reinforced this point. They observed that commercially sensitive Customs information, if compromised, could be exploited by malicious actors for criminal or commercial advantage.

Protecting Government information systems is therefore an important part of protecting our economy and our national security.

Colleagues, none of us can achieve these objectives alone.

Success depends on strong institutions, trusted partnerships and timely information sharing.

In this regard, the Ministry of Finance remains committed to working alongside every Ministry and agency represented here as we continue strengthening the systems that protect our economy, secure our borders and safeguard the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you.