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Press Release

Trinidad and Tobago Summit “a Caribbean effort”

Port of Spain (February 26, 2008) – The Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Patrick Manning, officially launched the Fifth Summit of the Americas today, February 26, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Port of Spain, in the presence of a number of high level officials, including the Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Ambassador Albert R. Ramdin; various government officials; members of the diplomatic community; the private sector; civil society and the media.

Affirming that it was an honour for Trinidad and Tobago to have been chosen to host the Fifth Summit, the Prime Minister expressed that, by extension, this Summit was also “a Caribbean effort” and vowed “to ensure that Caribbean concerns are fully aired in the deliberations of the Summit”, thereby underscoring the consultative and collaborative approach adopted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago towards the Summits process.

The Summit theme “**Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability**” was explored from the perspective of the hemispheric challenges they presented, with the Prime Minister lending insight into the areas relating to economic growth, poverty reduction, crime and security, food prices, energy security and the environment.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, spoke to the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Summits process, from the development of the country’s position on key issues to the implementation of the Summit mandates, underscoring that the Ministry’s active engagement in this process has “served to advance Trinidad and Tobago’s own national agenda articulated in its Vision 2020 Programme.”

The Summits of the Americas have created a strong framework for collective action in the region, primarily in the areas of democratic governance, economic integration, education, job creation, technology and sustainable development.

Trinidad and Tobago is uniquely positioned to enhance that framework. According to Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, National Coordinator and

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Special Envoy to the Americas, and Head of the National Secretariat responsible for coordinating the activities leading up to the 2009 Summit, “as a small state, Trinidad and Tobago can play a strategic role in bridging ideas among our member states and finding common approaches to the major challenges facing our Hemisphere. In so doing, we can help create conditions that can lead to new opportunities for economic and social progress for ourselves and the people of our hemisphere.”

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is optimistic about the future of the Americas and is committed to making the Fifth Summit a catalyst for positive change and ensuring that the process remains inclusive, people-centered and responsive to the needs and real concerns of citizens, building on their ability to improve their own lives and circumstances.

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About the Summit of the Americas

The Summit of the Americas brings together the 34 democratically elected leaders of the Western Hemisphere to exchange ideas and opinions on the main political, economic, social and security challenges facing the Hemisphere and to develop strategies and solutions to collectively address these challenges.

For further information, please contact:

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