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**STATEMENT BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DENNIS MOSES, MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

VIII SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
LIMA, PERU APRIL 12TH, 2018

“Democratic Governance Against Corruption”

Your Excellency Martín Alberto Vizcarra Cornejo, President of the Republic of Peru
Esteemed Heads of State and Heads of Government;
Your Excellency Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American States;
Distinguished Representatives;
Ladies and Gentleman:

Chair, permit me to place on record the profound appreciation of the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, for the excellent arrangements put in place by the Government of Peru for this Summit, and as well, for the very warm welcome to the beautiful city of Lima. Our thankfulness is extended to the Government of Peru for hosting this Eighth Summit of the Americas.

I also wish add my voice to the commendations on the theme selected, “Democratic Governance against Corruption”. Given ongoing and recent developments, this theme is of unquestionable relevance to member states of our hemisphere and a timely matter for the attention of the political executive.

Trinidad and Tobago recognises fully the deleterious effect that corruption can have, particularly on smaller developing nations, by diverting valuable, limited resources away from critical areas, hindering initiatives to promote growth and sustainable development. As such, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to confronting the issue of corruption and to the successful prosecution of those involved, as well as the recovery of assets for the benefit of its citizens. I would like to highlight a few initiatives in this regard:

- Firstly, the recent passage of Procurement Legislation in the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago in keeping with international best practice. This Legislation contains sanctions against bid rigging and collusion, and heavy fines for anyone involved in corrupt practices. It also includes regulations on transparency, accountability, value-for-money and local content.
- Secondly, Anti-Terrorism Legislation is currently being considered by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. The Anti-Terrorism Bill seeks to strengthen the existing law to deal more effectively with terrorism financing, money laundering, tax evasion, and suspicious transactions. In particular, it seeks to empower the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago to institute proceedings to freeze assets of an individual or entity that is involved in terrorist activity; and to enforce such freezing orders in other jurisdictions.
- Thirdly, a Whistle-blower Protection Bill was introduced in the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago earlier this month, that is April of 2018. The Bill aims to combat corruption and other wrongdoings by encouraging and facilitating disclosures of improper conduct in the public and private sector; and to protect persons making those disclosures from detrimental action, and as well to regulate the receiving, investigating or otherwise dealing with disclosures of improper conduct and to provide for other matters connected therewith.
- Fourthly, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in keeping with the dictates and recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force as well as the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, has established the Financial Intelligence Unit and continues to comply with the recommendations of these institutions on an ongoing basis.
- Also, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to enacting Campaign Finance Reform Legislation.

I would also like to recognise two important constituencies in Trinidad and Tobago that play a role in bringing allegations of corruption to light and to fighting against impunity. They are our country's vibrant media and civil society. As for our local media, investigative journalists continue to enjoy a level of freedom that is unparalleled in some parts of the world. Indeed, the most recent installment of the World Press Freedom Index has seen Trinidad and Tobago jumping ten places from our 2016 position, to now rank 34th out of 180 countries in 2017. The robust network of civil society organisations in Trinidad and Tobago also play a role in deterring corruption by raising awareness, stimulating action and lobby for the reform of systems, institutions and laws.

Excellencies, although Trinidad and Tobago continues to forge ahead in its efforts at the national level, we recognise that there are limits to what we as individual Member States can do, in order to achieve a corruption-free society and world; particularly in the face of highly organised transnational crime. It is for this reason that Trinidad and Tobago is open to participating in legitimate global initiatives, which are focussed on simplifying the collection and collation of evidence, with which to successfully prosecute those engaged in corrupt acts. Trinidad and Tobago is also open to negotiating and implementing bilateral arrangements, which will facilitate the sharing of critical information with partner countries with the ultimate objective of exposing, prosecuting and preventing acts of corruption. No country can do it alone, yet every country has a part to play in exposing and rooting out corruption in all its manifestations.

Chair, Trinidad and Tobago sees great benefit to initiatives, at the hemispheric level, aimed at strengthening efforts and mechanisms to address the scourge of corruption. As I conclude, allow me to reiterate the firm commitment and willingness of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to collaborate with partners in the hemisphere to treat decisively with corruption and to promote the transparency and accountability our citizens rightfully demand of us.

Allow me to thank you very much.