



**STATEMENT BY
THE Deputy Permanent Secretary OF PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT**

ON

**THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL
CONSULTATION ON THE CARICOM ENVIRONMENTAL
AND NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY AND
DRAFT ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN, 2017-2022**

Hilton Trinidad

August 21

9 am

Salutations

Good morning,

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be part of Launch of the local leg of consultations on the Draft Caribbean Community Environmental and Natural Resources Policy and Draft Environment Action Plan, 2017-2022.

Let me extend congratulations to CARICOM for its strong advocacy role in the promotion of a regional approach to the sustainable management of the environmental and natural resources of the Community and its Member States.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the main Government body responsible for implementing the National Agenda for Sustainable Development, sustainability and the environmental protection are concepts that have always been encouraged and actively promoted by the Ministry of Planning and Development. After all, the conservation of our natural resources, upon which we depend for clean water, food, fresh air, shelter and our livelihoods is critical to the country's future development.

Trinidad and Tobago's natural resource base has allowed for our rapid industrialization and growing demand for goods and services over the years. Simultaneously, however, the nation also suffers from the attendant environmental problems associated with the production of commodities. As such, this Government is committed to making every effort to ensure that Trinidad and Tobago finds the right balance between economic development and environmental protection. Through the development and implementation of national environmental policy and legislation, the Ministry of Planning and Development regulates developmental activities; ensuring that they improve the health and safety of the population and are conducted in a manner that preserves the integrity of the environment.

This is embodied in our National Environmental Policy (NEP) which is a framework for environmental management in Trinidad and Tobago. The NEP recognizes that the environment is an essential pillar for our economic and social development. It is broad-based and therefore, applies to all sectors and areas of activity by providing general guidelines for conceptualization and development of plans and programmes for the management of the environment. Furthermore, the Policy also provides the necessary guidance

for enhancing the legislative framework of environmental protection through subsidiary legislation under the Environmental Management Act.

Our NEP reflects the quality of life desired by the people of Trinidad and Tobago for themselves and their children. It outlines how the interactions between humans and the environment are to be managed for decades to come; governing all national and sectoral policies, programs and plans with bearing on the environment. Specifically, it:

1. Provides direction to public, private, non-governmental and other national actors regarding environmental sustainability.
2. Clearly articulates and communicates national environmental commitments and objectives in a transparent manner.
3. Provides a rational, practical and comprehensive framework for addressing the salient threats to environmental sustainability.

In an effort to ensure our NEP is current and relevant, the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), which is under the purview of the Ministry of Planning and Development is in the process of revising the 2006 NEP.

Our draft Revised NEP has identified six (6) Priorities Areas for Trinidad and Tobago, these being:

- Greening the Economy
 - Safe, Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Human Settlements and Infrastructure
 - Safeguarding Human and Ecological Resilience
 - Sustainable Management of Resources
- An Informed, Equitable and Environmentally-responsible Society
- Stewardship and Long-term Sustainability

Ladies and Gentlemen, this Government has placed special emphasis on ensuring the sustainable management of the environment. In this regard, the Government reorganizes the critical role that our countries' rich natural resources play in the socio-economic development of our nation. In this regard, the Draft National Development Strategy (2016-2030), Vision 2030, has emphasized the need for a separate theme that places the Environment at the centre of our country's Social and Economic Development.

Our Vision 2030 National Development Strategy, aims to provide a broad socio-economic development framework to the year 2030. It is intended to provide for our long-term development process, inclusive of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As the country's principal strategic planning document, it defines the priorities and overarching thrust of our national development policy. This incorporates achieving sustainable economic growth, through greater diversification of the economy, placing the environment at the centre of social and economic development as well as improving the social conditions and quality of life of citizens in an inclusive and ecologically sensitive manner.

It is within this context, that the CARICOM Environmental Policy and its corresponding Action Plan will work in tandem with our National Environmental Policy, along with our National Development Strategy to improve the management of our country's and region's unique and rich biological heritage.

Ladies and gentlemen, the need for more effective development controls has led to a situation where the natural environment and our own survival are seriously threatened by a range of activities. If the CARICOM Environmental Policy and its corresponding Action Plan are adopted and implemented throughout the Member States then the chances of achieving

the goal of sustainable development will appreciate significantly. The Ministry of Planning and Development would like to encourage CARICOM to maintain its efforts in actively pursuing the interests of the Caribbean region, and in so doing, elevating the national and by extension, regional profile in the international natural resource management. We also pledge to provide continued efforts in any way we can.

In closing, I wish you all a fruitful two (2) days with robust and focused discussions. It is my desire that this will help concretize a regional approach to the sustainable management of the environmental and natural resources of the Community and its Member States.

I thank you.