

**Statement Delivered by the Honourable Winston Dookeran, Minister of Foreign
Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago at the VI Italy Latin America and the Caribbean
Conference,
December 12-13, 2013
Rome, Italy**

The Honourable Winston Dookeran, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago delivered a presentation on the subject of *Regional Development, Environmental Sustainability and Social and Productive Inclusion* during the last session of the two day conference.

The following is the text of his statement:

This is the first time that Trinidad and Tobago is attending this Conference and I want to express sentiments of appreciation, along with my colleagues from Guyana, Haiti and Suriname who are here with us. This is indeed an opportunity that the Caribbean region can use to deepen its relations with Latin America and Italy over the coming years.

I note the current shifts in world trade triggered by global forces and the resulting need to examine the question of resilience. It is in this context that the convergence process, sometimes dubbed 'integration without borders' has engaged our attention in the Caribbean Community.

Integration without borders and a new frontier to do so is considered as a mechanism for developing resilience in the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean. The significance of regional development platforms such as the Pacific Alliance and triangular cooperation, as featured in yesterday's discussions as mechanisms for development, has also been noted.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to point out some of the drivers of the convergence process:

1. The issue of sharing the risks of development between all the different drivers of development.
2. The possibility of exploring and developing strategies to encourage endogenous growth.
3. The issue of financing for infrastructure in particular.
4. The requirement for a synergy between the political logic and the economic logic of resilience.

Mr. Chairman, as we attempt to drill down for development, I wish to endorse the two suggestions made by the Foreign Minister of Mexico. I wish to express my hope that this Conference will provide the platform through which the first suggestion, which dealt with the global design for SMEs, can be pursued. Similarly, the second suggestion is worthy of further consideration and dealt with the establishment of a forum for the exchange of views on global convergence to bring together universities, scholars and researchers to discuss the issue.

I wish to highlight the need to develop an appropriate axis for cooperation between Latin America, Europe and Italy and the Caribbean such that the Caribbean does not remain a mere appendage but is actively engaged diplomatically.

I wish to urge those present here to actively examine ways for greater engagement in the Region. I must also highlight the vulnerability of the Caribbean region to external shocks that are not transitory in nature but a permanent feature of economic management. As a result, many of the avenues through which resilience can be built, such as through financial means, have been predicated on this basis.

We have placed on the agenda the issue of how to build external buffers to develop resilience and to ensure that there is sustainability in the process of economic development. In this regard, the need for engaging in dialogue with a view of finding mechanisms tailored to suit the specific problems faced by the Caribbean region must be emphasized.

I wish to conclude by placing the issue of finding that new axis of cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean, and Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. Certainly, in the final analysis, drilling down for development is the way to build resilience in economic development.

Thank you.