



**Opening Remarks by Mr. Edo Stork, UNDP Resident Representative a.i.
for Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten
at the Opening of the UNDP T&T Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) Workshop,
2 August 2011, Crowne Plaza Port of Spain**

Senator Dr. The Honourable Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie,
Minister of Planning and the Economy,

Deputy Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Planning and the Economy,

Distinguished government officials,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Other distinguished invitees
Members of the press and media,
Colleagues,

Good morning

It is an honour to be with you this morning for this very important workshop that aims to develop UNDP's Country Programme Action Plan for Trinidad and Tobago. In its bare essence this action plan will represent an agreed list of initiatives and projects that the UNDP will be embarking upon in T&T with its partners for the four year period from 2012 to 2015.

Story leading to: "Empowered Lives. Resilient Nations"

UNDP's work around the world presents a good opportunity to connect to the challenges Trinidad and Tobago faces in today's modern interconnected world. The global economy is still feeling the consequences from a recent global financial downturn and from a possible federal debt default in the United States that was averted only yesterday which would have had major global consequences and would have been felt strongly in Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago is not immune from these global events when they occur and if they happen they impact the lives of many people around the country. Today's world requires resilient nations, people and communities that can weather financial storms and other shocks, manage crises, deal with climate change and other environmental challenges, and deploy inclusive and participative democratic processes to grow stronger.

The way to strengthen and create resilient nations is by empowering its people. UNDP's first global Human Development Report in 1990 already opened with the simply stated premise that has guided all subsequent Reports: "People are the real wealth of a nation". If countries can create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives, a strong foundation for sustainable human development is built.

Trinidad and Tobago, like many other nations, is under pressure to make sure the gains and benefits recently accrued from growth in human development benefit everybody. As shown by other UNDP Human Development Reports the Latin American and Caribbean region is one of the most unequal regions of the world containing some of the richest and poorest people living together.



The UNDP in Trinidad and Tobago is ready to assist the nation and has a long track record of over forty years in the country with concrete development results. UNDP established its office in 1961 and since that time was involved in many ground breaking initiatives such as for example in the idea of pursuing off-shore drilling, the establishment of important institutions such as the EMA and ODPM, the first major funder for Turtle Conservation in Grand Riviere, the deployment of many medical professionals to strengthen healthcare in medical institutions throughout the country, the establishment of the first national and central socio economic database in the country, the provision of micro credit in poor households, certification of hundreds of public civil servants in international best practice results based management methodologies, and the list goes on.

A next major deliverable for UNDP will be the launch of the Caribbean Human Development Report on Citizen Security which is carded to be launched in T&T in November 2011. Contents of the report will be high quality and in depth analysis of current issues around violent crime in the Caribbean, its impact on Human Development, and will feature best practice case studies and recommendations to improve upon Citizen Security. In T&T UNDP is keen to work with partners to implement the recommendations that will be forthcoming from the report.

In summary today's UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience, and resources to help people build a better life. The work that we will be doing today did not start today. As a matter of fact, the UNDP Country Programme Document for T&T was approved in UNDP's Executive Board in June 2011. In the same Executive Board meeting His Excellency Rodney Charles, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations gave an excellent statement of support towards UNDP's new Country Programme.

The UNDP T&T Country Programme was developed together with the Government and is based upon the feedback of various Ministries and directly connected to the Governments People's Partnership Manifesto policy document. It also takes into account UNDP's work in previous years and lessons learnt. In consultations with the Government it was felt that UNDP's current development assistance niche sits in four out of the Seven Government Pillars for Sustainable Development namely: Poverty Reduction (Pillar 2), Improved Human Security (Pillar 3), Energy and Environment (Pillar 5), and Democratic Governance (Pillar 6).

But, even though these four areas of UNDP assistance have now been identified much remains to be done to identify concrete initiatives that will have an impact towards these larger goals. A small pipeline of projects exists but more needs to be developed. This is the reason why we are all here today, to have open and inclusive consultations on what can and should be done and to start to identify new partnerships that will allow UNDP to continue to make meaningful contributions towards issues of national importance.

Before I conclude I would like to highlight two important points with regards to Human Rights and the Millennium Development Goals and the importance they have for the work we are to do here today. Human Rights are at the very heart of the United Nations which was founded in 1945 after the Second World War. I read from the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations:

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
[\[http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/preamble.shtml\]](http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/preamble.shtml)



Trinidad & Tobago

Human Rights remain absolutely crucial to development and the work of the UN and UNDP in T&T. T&T is a signatory to many Human Rights treaties and the initiatives we will be contemplating today should support the implementation of these human rights in the country.

T&T is also a signatory to the ground breaking Millennium Declaration from which came forward a global commitment to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals or MDGs by 2015. In September 2010, at the United Nations in New York, the world recommitted itself to accelerate progress towards the MDGs. T&T has been very successful in the recent past and is on track to attain some of these goals by 2015 with more work to be done. UNDP's future initiatives should strive to further support the achievements of these goals.

In short you can see Human Rights and attainment of the MDGs still play a pivotal role in UNDP's development programming.

In closing, let me wish you a very fruitful meeting and a strong continuation of our on-going partnership.

Thank you