

**Statement of the Honourable Minister on
The Commemoration of International Peace Day – 21st
September 2005**

- Fellow Ministers
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Resident Co-ordinator of the United Nations System's Operational Activities for Development and UNDP's Resident Representative
- Co-hosting Agencies, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and the Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD)
- Heads of other UN Agencies
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening,

I am indeed delighted to be afforded this opportunity to join with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in observing the commemoration of this very significant day on our UN calendar, *the International Day of Peace*.

As a committed member of the United Nations for the past 43 years, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has taken very seriously its responsibility of upholding the Organization's fundamental ideals, so clearly enunciated in the Charter.

As a small developing state, Trinidad and Tobago recognises the inherent value of multilateralism, and the approach it affords the global community in addressing its most serious concerns.

It is because of this understanding and commitment of purpose that like-minded states view the United Nations as a tangible expression of the living ideal that relationships among peoples will be increasingly inspired by a truly universal brotherhood. However, it is

not until this ideal is shared by all, that there will be stable peace throughout the world.

We live in a world which, on the one hand, is growing ever closer, and more interconnected as national boundaries give way to seamless societies, with the unification of economies, cultures and societies. However, there also exist, many unresolved conflicts, some steeped in ancient hatreds and other new and emerging conflicts born out of poverty, injustice and indifference.

It is for these reasons that global initiatives such as an International Day of Peace are so very important, for such carries with it the simple but significant request that all peoples everywhere, gather together, to pause, and to think more deeply about the meaning of peace. In so doing, states need to renew their dedication to furthering the development of a culture of peace beginning not only with their own societies, but also extending beyond. There is no doubt that by extension, this harmony among peoples can result in the tranquillity of *order* among nations.

As we all know, the pursuit of true peace cannot be fully attained in one area to the total exclusion of other dimensions of our world society. It is significant that the annual commemoration of International Day of Peace coincides with the opening of the General Assembly. This year we have witnessed one of the largest gatherings of world leaders in the history of the United Nations for the purpose of undertaking a five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Heads of State and Government discussed meaningful strategies intended to link development, security, human rights and peace into a cohesive framework.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is fully supportive of the recommendation contained in the Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which calls for the establishment of a Peace Building Commission to further serve the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations. Among its core functions would be to identify countries under stress and at risk of sliding towards State collapse; to organize in partnership with the national Government proactive assistance in preventing that process from developing further; to assist in the

planning for transition between conflict and post conflict peace building; and in particular, to marshal and sustain the efforts of the international community in post-conflict peace building for indefinite periods of time.

Many states, including countries in this region, are certainly not immune from threats to the national peace. I, therefore, find particularly appealing and appropriate, the call for Governments to pledge to honour the UN's request for at least one day of global ceasefire and non-violence.

As a Government and nation we are sensitive to the very serious challenges posed to the achievement of national development objectives and in particular to our young people, our main national asset. An example is the illegal trade in small arms. In this context, I pay tribute to the efforts of the Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) as they seek to combat gun crime in our society. The photographic display entitled '*Small Arms, Our Problem*' vividly conveys the impact on human lives and forces us to confront the horrors of societies living under the threat of such arms.

In closing, Ladies and Gentlemen, I once again wish to endorse the efforts of the United Nations in promoting this laudable endeavour and associated activities, to acknowledge the sterling efforts of UNIC and WINAD who have worked tirelessly in providing the occasion with its unique stamp and to all those other individuals whose behind the scenes efforts have contributed to the successful staging of this year's commemoration.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you!