

Statement

The Delegation of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Sixteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) – 16 - Review Session and the CSD – 17 – Policy Session to be held at the United Nations Headquarters, New York; (Conference Room 4) 7 May, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation expresses appreciation to the Secretary General, and the Bureau for the Reports (E/CN.17/2008/2) reviewing the thematic cluster of issues for implementation cycle 2008 – 2009 — **Agriculture; Rural Development; Land; Drought; Desertification; and Africa** — We thank the distinguished panel for the informative presentations which will drive this process forward. My delegation identifies with the statements delivered on behalf of G 77 and China; on behalf of SIDS and AOSIS.

Despite strong industrial progress, Trinidad and Tobago is challenged by rural poverty. Domestic food production is on the decline, while food imports have increased significantly, fuelled largely by the increases in foreign exchange due to high oil prices.

The National Development Plan entitled: *Vision 2020* aims to take Trinidad and Tobago to developed country status on or before 2020. It incorporates the goals of the MDGs and the World Food Summit, including other internationally agreed commitments. In this regard, a number of projects have been implemented to positively impact agriculture and rural development. **These agro-economic and development projects can be viewed on the government's website: www.gov.tt on the link: Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.** Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to bring to your attention the following incentives and activities:

- ❖ **WOMEN INVOLVEMENT IN AGRICULTURE:** Because of the specific problems which women farmers face such as: less access to land and ownership of land and greater association with subsistence agriculture; the Ministry of Agriculture... is very supportive of every initiative to alleviate these and other problems affecting women involved in the agricultural sector at all levels.

- ❖ **TO STIMULATE YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN AGRICULTURE:** The Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture (YAPA) aims at providing the 18-25 year-old youth with the technological knowledge and skills of the business of agriculture.

- ❖ **THE EXTENSION TRAINING AND INFORMATION SERVICES:** A mobile learning unit is used for extension and training and information services. Free training is provided to community groups.
- ❖ **INFRASTRUCTURE:** The period 2002-2007 saw the construction and rehabilitative works on 250 km of access roads throughout the country.
- ❖ **FINANCE AND CREDIT:** The Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) provides credit to develop agriculture.
- ❖ **FOOD PRODUCTION AND PRICE STABILITY:** A Prices Advisory Council has been established with a mandate to address the level of prices in the economy.
- ❖ **DATABASES AND STATISTICS:** The National Research and Development capacity has been strengthened.
- ❖ The School Nutrition Programme has been expanded.

SIDS — A Day in its own right:

Finally, my delegation also joins with those delegations that have urged the Bureau “to avoid scheduling conflicts and competing sessions” in the future. My delegation strongly urges that a specific day be set aside for the observance of SIDS Day with no competing activities organized in parallel.
