

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S 55<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE  
CELEBRATIONS  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO CONSUL TO GHANA  
SPEECH BY GERRY C. BROOKS  
CHAIRMAN- NGC GROUP OF COMPANIES  
SEPT 1<sup>ST</sup> 2017**

ON BEHALF OF PRIME MINISTER DR. THE HONOURABLE KEITH ROWLEY AND THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, AND ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL GAS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, I AM EXTREMELY PLEASED TO BRING GREETINGS ON THE 55<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.

APART FROM TIMES WHEN I WAS AT UNIVERSITY IN BARBADOS AND IN NORTH AMERICA, THIS IS A RARE AND VERY SPECIAL OCCASION IN WHICH I AM CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY OUTSIDE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. BUT I COULDN'T THINK OF A BETTER PLACE TO COMMEMORATE IT TODAY, THAN AMONG FELLOW TRINIDADIAN AND TOBAGONIAN AND FRIENDS FROM THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY OF GHANA, A COUNTRY THAT HAS MUCH IN COMMON WITH TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. I'M SURE MY COLLEAGUES MARK LOQUAN, PRESIDENT OF THE NGC, AND ALVIN DOOKIE, VICE PRESIDENT OF PHOENIX PARK GAS PROCESSORS LIMITED ECHO MY SENTIMENTS. IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE.

MAY I ALSO AT THE OUTSET EMBRACE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FORMALLY CONGRATULATE THE GHANIAN GOVERNMENT HEADED

BY PRESIDENT AKUFO-ADDOO ON BEING ELECTED INTO OFFICE AND WISH YOU A SUCCESSFUL TERM, WHILST ASSURING YOU OF OUR COOPERATION IN YOUR QUEST TO REALIZE “A MODERN, DIVERSIFIED, EFFICIENT, AND FINANCIALLY STABLE ENERGY ECONOMY”.

AT EXACTLY MIDNIGHT, THE UNION JACK WAS LOWERED MAKING WAY FOR THE RED, WHITE AND BLACK OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FLAG. THAT HISTORIC ACT TOOK PLACE ON AUGUST 31, 1962. IT WAS FIVE YEARS PRIOR TO THIS THAT ON THE 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1957, THE PEOPLE OF GHANA CELEBRATED THE END OF COLONIAL RULE AND THE USHERING IN OF INDEPENDENCE. AS THE FIRST SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRY TO GAIN INDEPENDENCE, GHANA LED THE WAY FOR OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO GAIN INDEPENDENCE. BUT, LONG BEFORE WE BOTH ACHIEVED INDEPENDENCE, THE COUNTRIES OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND GHANA HAD SHARED A COMMON DNA, A COMMON HISTORY, BONDED BY SLAVERY, A COMMON LEGAL SYSTEM AND SHARED CULTURE. (JOKE: OTHERS HAVE EXTENDED THAT BOND BY MARRIAGE, ASK JON MITCHELL’S DAD AND ROBERT LE HUNTE).

AS WE CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE FIFTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, LET US PAUSE TO RECOGNIZE THE STRIDES WE’VE MADE AS TRINBAGONIANS, AND THE ROAD WE’VE TRAVELLED FROM THAT

MEMORABLE DAY IN 1962. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHAT **INDEPENDENCE** MEANS TO US.

IN HIS FIRST INDEPENDENCE DAY RADIO ADDRESS TO THE NATION, OUR FIRST PRIME MINISTER, DR. ERIC WILLIAMS POSED TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT NATION. HE ASKED US:

1. ***“WHAT USE WILL YOU MAKE OF YOUR INDEPENDENCE? AND***
2. ***WHAT WILL YOU TRANSMIT TO YOUR CHILDREN ....YEARS FROM TODAY?***

HE FURTHER STATED THAT ***“WHATEVER THE CHALLENGE THAT FACES YOU, FROM WHATEVER QUARTER, PLACE ALWAYS FIRST THAT NATIONAL INTEREST AND THE NATIONAL CAUSE. THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION DEPENDS ON THE STRENGTH OF ITS CITIZENS ..... LET US PRESENT TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD THE UNITED FRONT OF A NATION THINKING FOR ITSELF, KNOWING ITS OWN MIND AND SPEAKING ITS OWN POINT OF VIEW.”***

THE WORDS OF DR. WILLIAMS ARE STILL RELEVANT TODAY AND RESONATE WITH US AT THE NGC. INSPIRED BY DR. WILLIAMS, NGC BELIEVES IN SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION. INDEED THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION FOR A DEVELOPING NATION TODAY, WHAT WITH BREXIT, A RAPIDLY CHANGING GLOBAL

ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE, THE TRUMP ERA WITH ALL ITS UNCERTAINTY AND OTHER SEISMIC GEOPOLITICAL CHANGES.

TODAY, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IS TRANSFORMATIVELY SEEKING TO RESHAPE OUR ENERGY ARCHITECTURE AND IS DELIBERATELY ENGAGING COUNTRIES THAT HAVE THE SAME DEVELOPMENT AGENDA. AS A SMALL NATION OF 1.3 MILLION PEOPLE, SINCE INDEPENDENCE WE HAVE STRATEGICALLY AND SUCCESSFULLY MONETIZED OUR NATURAL RESOURCES THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE COMPANIES SUCH AS THE NATIONAL GAS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES. BUT MORE MUST NOW BE DONE! **WE ARE DETERMINED TO DO IT!**

MOVING FORTY ONE YEARS AGO FROM A FAIRLY NARROW REMIT OF GAS TRANSMISSION, DISTRIBUTION AND COMPRESSION, TODAY, NGC THROUGH ITS 24 SUBSIDIARIES, HAS INVESTED IN NATURAL GAS BASED DEVELOPMENT AND MERCHANDISING; NATURAL GAS AGGREGATION; TRANSPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION; PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE; LNG PRODUCTION; MARKETING AND SHIPPING; DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL SITES; PORT AND MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE; AGGREGATION, FRACTIONATION, EXPORT AND MARKETING OF NATURAL GAS LIQUIDS AND MARKETING OF COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS.

THE GROWTH OVER THE PAST 4 DECADES OF THE NGC GROUP OF COMPANIES, PETROTRIN AND OTHER ENERGY SECTOR PLAYERS, HAVE FACILITATED OUR SECTOR ACCOUNTING FOR 34.6% OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S GDP AND 78% OF EXPORT EARNINGS. REFLECTED IN 11 AMONIA PLANTS, 7 METHANOL PLANTS, 4 LNG TRAINS AND A VIBRANT ENERGY SERVICES SECTOR!

IF DR. WILLIAMS WERE STILL ALIVE, HE WOULD LIKELY APPLAUD THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE ENERGY SECTOR...AND CHALLENGE US TO PRESS FORWARD! DR WILLIAMS WAS A PAN AFRICAN/PAN CARIBBEAN SCHOLAR AND LEADER. HE URGED SOUTH/SOUTH COOPERATION LONG BEFORE IT BECAME POPULIST. OUR CURRENT PRIME MINISTER DR. KEITH ROWLEY SHARES A SIMILAR PHILOSOPHY WHICH UNDERPINNED THE GENERAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT EXECUTED LAST YEAR BETWEEN GHANA AND TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING EXECUTED BETWEEN THE NGC AND GNPC. IT IS THEREFORE TIMELY THAT WE ARE HERE AT THE CELEBRATION OF OUR INDEPENDENCE... AT A TIME WHEN THE GAS ARCHITECTURE AND VALUE CHAIN IS CHANGING DRAMATICALLY. LET US BUILD ON THESE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS. LET US RECOMMIT TO SOUTH/SOUTH COOPERATION. NGC AND TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ARE HERE TO HELP ACCELERATE THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF YOUR ENERGY VISION. IT IS A CRITICAL PATHWAY TO SUSTAINED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND

INFRASTRUCTURAL GROWTH. WE AT THE NGC ARE READY TO PROVIDE ANY SUPPORT REQUIRED.

YESTERDAY EVENING WE WERE GUESTS AT A WONDERFUL FUNCTION HOSTED BY REPUBLIC BANK AND HFC BANK. MAY I ALSO RECOGNIZE THE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS AND CONTRIBUTION MADE BY REPUBLIC BANK AND ITS SUBSIDIARY- HFC BANK AND ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE THEIR FACILITIES. I THANK ITS CHAIRMAN, CHARLES ZOUENIS AND HFC COLLEAGUES FOR THEIR PRESENCE THIS EVENING. I ALSO WARMLY CONGRATULATE, MR. ANTHONY JORDAN ON HIS RECENT PROMOTION TO MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE BANK. (APPLAUSE)

THIS EVENING'S CELEBRATION HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY THE CONSCIENTIOUS WORK OF OUR HONORARY COUNSEL JON MITCHELL. THIS EVENING WE FORMALLY THANK HIM FOR HIS VERY PROFESSIONAL AND SELFLESS REPRESENTATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO OVER THE YEARS. HE HAS PROVEN TO BE AN EXCELLENT ALLY AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND OF THE NGC. LET US WARMLY CONGRATULATE HIM. (APPLAUSE)

**(TOAST.) FINALLY, PLEASE RISE IN JOINING ME IN A TOAST**

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, AS WE CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE, LET US RESET AND DREAM BIG. LET US CONTINUE TO PUNCH ABOVE OUR WEIGHT AS WE DID IN THE RECENT IAAF 400 METRES RELAY FINALS WHEN WE CAPTURED GOLD. LET US WORK TRANSFORMATIVELY TO REALIZE THE VISION OF OUR FOREFATHERS. MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS OUR GOVERNMENT, OUR NATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, OUR INSTITUTIONS AND OUR PEOPLE TO ENABLE US COLLECTIVELY AND INDIVIDUALLY TO REALIZE OUR FULLEST POTENTIAL AND TO POSITIVELY IMPACT ALL WITH WHOM WE COME INTO CONTACT.

AND MAY OUR BEST DAYS BE STILL YET TO COME. HAPPY INDEPENDENCE AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS OUR NATION.

FORGE FROM THE LOVE OF LIBERTY.....