

14th October, 2009.

His Excellency James Michel,
President, Republic of Seychelles
State House,
P.O. Box 55,
Victoria,
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Fusion, Diversity, Unity, Determination...

What can my country, Trinidad and Tobago teach the world? I believe Trinidad and Tobago exemplifies cultural integration and diversity.

Presently, the world is scourged by much confusion and hostility, war and indifference, lack of consideration and brutality. Yet, Trinidad and Tobago ceaselessly demonstrates what is greatly needed the world over; unity and tolerance, the understanding of the views of others.

Indeed a great many nations possess multi ethnic populations but my country can boast of a remarkably linked cosmopolitan people that sometimes seem surreal. Interconnected by differences, we have come together to create an indescribable mix of races, cultures, religions, opinions and so much more.

As the saying goes, 'No man is an island'. Most certainly, this adage proves true for this twin island republic. As citizens both young and old, we coalesce to emit a pronounced effervescence of incredibly rich culture.

Fusion; the fusion of cultures, perspectives, personalities into the rich silk fabric that is our people. Our oneness, our uniqueness is woven together by strong threads of loyalty, national pride, tolerance and appreciation of our fellow man. The beautiful intricacies of us lie in our brave unassuming simplicity.

Simple, but ever meaningful, we are a melting pot of flagrant individual constituents which have blended to form a savory product that is non-pareil – a product which defies the equation from which it was derived – a product which at times appears too outstanding to have originated from just a mix of different races; the product of who we are, as a people, is just too magnificent. Lurking intrinsically, in the soul of every Trinbagonian, as we call ourselves, is the affinity, the appreciation, the love for one another. It is a love that is inculcated in each man, each child, a love that punctuates all barriers to become genuine understanding, a love that pulses and flows from citizen to citizen of this nation.

Pulses, it seems as well, that who we are, our times of year, our seasons are not merely determined by conditions of the atmosphere or scientific

principle. No, our music is our pulse. Sweet echoes of our very own steel pan; the powerful, spirit moving tassa and shango drums received from our forefathers are all part of our diverse culture. Melodic strums of acoustic guitars and cuatros strum in our Christmas season. We are not just Carnival, which many call the greatest show on earth. Mr. Michel our ongoing interaction with each other is much greater.

Determination; Trinidad and Tobago shines as a beacon in this light also. My country epitomises resilience and characterises buoyancy. Unfazed, undeterred by trials and tribulations like slavery and indentureship, we look forward. Despite challenges, despite stumbling blocks we tread stepping stone after stepping stone. With elasticity, we continuously rebound from all upsets; seeking always a victorious end.

What can my country teach the world? Any visitor to our shores is imbued with generous warmth and friendliness. A true sense of who we are is imparted to all. And, who we are is forever etched, pleasantly, in the consciousness of those we encounter. As nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, we seldom hesitate to share our rich cultural past with others; we readily allow them to experience the thrills of the present and they in turn yearn to partake in future experiences and so become part of tomorrow's wonderful history.

Tolerance; privileged are we to be exposed to the beliefs of one another and an abundance of respect for the varied denominations prevails. This too, is part of who we are.

Sir, I believe every country, every individual in this world can contribute something meaningful to another. Surely, there is much that my country can learn from fellow nations. Conversely, we have much to share. Our nation possesses tremendous wealth in the form of its people.

I believe that as a nation, as individuals, there are an infinite number of lessons which the world can emulate. These lessons come not in the manner of lengthy words but by modest displays of loyalty, tolerance, cultural integration and our passion. In fact, Mr. Michel, the most important thing we can teach the world is who we are!

Yours

respectfully,

Asabi

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