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As the host of this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, my country, Trinidad and Tobago, looks forward to your arrival for this gathering. We will welcome an influx of leaders and delegates from fifty-three Commonwealth countries. Through this meeting, our country's culture, history and economy will be given exposure on a worldwide stage.

Trinidad and Tobago is a small twin island state which can be considered a mustard seed in comparison to some of the other Commonwealth countries such as the United Kingdom. However, this mustard seed has sprouted into a nation which can be used as an example to teach the rest of the world.

The mustard seed is two millimetres in length but grows into a tree, taller than two meters. Similarly, Trinidad and Tobago is a small country which has now grown to be one of the wealthiest countries in the Caribbean. It is one of the most successful

economies in the English-speaking Caribbean and is known for being an exceptional site for international business.

Just as the mustard tree is known for producing the best condiment in the food industry, Trinidad and Tobago also produces world renowned products. Our cocoa is among the eight finest produced in the world, and is considered a prime ingredient in dark chocolates such as Chocolat Weiss in France. Trinidad and Tobago is also the fifth-largest exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in the world and the single largest supplier of LNG to the United States of America.

An interesting fact is that the root of a mustard plant grows to 63 feet in the ground. It becomes well-grounded in its habitation. Likewise, our nation's foundation is built on our watch words, discipline, tolerance and production, which have carried us through many unpleasant times such as an attempted coup in 1990. In addition, just as sheep are attracted to the fragrance of the mustard tree, so too are tourists to Trinidad because of its food, urban living and festive way of life, for example, Carnival. They are also attracted to Tobago for its beautiful beaches, friendly residents, and eco-tourism such as the Buccoo Reef. Also, people of various races feel welcomed in our country as our rainbow people live in harmony with one another.

Both the mustard tree and Trinidad and Tobago possess curative qualities. Whereas oil from the mustard tree drips onto sheep killing ticks and fleas, in the same way, Trinidad and Tobago helps its neighbouring countries in any way possible. In the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, we sent health supplies and foreign aid to Grenada. We also ensure that the quality of life enjoyed by the citizens of our country, whether it is the elderly or the new generation, is one of an acceptable standard.

Providing for the new generation is a priority for Trinidad and Tobago, as the new generation is at the heart of our country's creativity, innovation and economic progress. They represent our future human resource and leaders. Therefore, ensuring that they are provided for is essential for sustainable development. To facilitate sustainable development, the pillars of equity, productivity and empowerment must be evident in the new generation.

The government of Trinidad and Tobago is constantly seeking to become more equitable by affording young people access to greater opportunities. For example, our country enjoys both universal primary and secondary education as well as free tuition for its citizens at the tertiary level of education. The issue of productivity is of such great concern that the government of Trinidad and Tobago as well as the private sector has teamed up with non-governmental organisations to find solutions to implement new technologies and upgrade worker's skills.

Trinidad and Tobago is serving the new generation with equity, opportunities and methods to improve their productivity in an effort to empower them. When young people feel empowered, they participate in national issues and help to fuel sustainable development.

My country, Trinidad and Tobago, can teach the world that the size of a country does not reflect its success but through discipline and willpower, it is possible to become a resilient and prosperous nation which can serve its new generation and sustain development.