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**Statement by The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Colombia at the Human Rights Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2013**

Thank you Mister President.

My delegation is pleased to participate in the review of our regional neighbour at this 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Universal Periodic Review and we thank them for their National Report.

Trinidad and Tobago notes that Colombia, while experiencing considerable economic growth over the last four years, is still faced with challenges – as do many other developing countries - which may impact efforts to improve social and human rights conditions on the ground.

One of these challenges is the situation of armed conflict which the country has grappled with over the past five (5) decades. In this context my delegation recognizes the commitment of the Colombian Government to stabilize the situation after the recent announcement of a peace process between the Government and the FARC armed forces.

Human trafficking remains a major concern for the Government of Colombia as exemplified by the various measures adopted to address this global problem. We urge the Government to continue its engagement with the relevant international bodies with a view to alleviating the current situation.

Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago takes due note of, and welcomes the fact that last year, Colombia ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

In closing, my delegation recommends the following:

1. That Colombia strengthens its human trafficking prevention programmes in its new National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons for 2013-2018.
2. The establishment, in the near future, of the Truth Commission to facilitate the justice and peace process within the country.

I thank you Mister President.