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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
TO THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA  
STATEMENT BY TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO - UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA, 5 FEBRUARY, 2014**

Thank you Mr. President.

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the delegation from the Dominican Republic headed by the Distinguished Minister of (...to be inserted) and expresses its appreciation for the submission of their National Report.

Mr. President, we recognise the challenge facing our region in combating the global dilemma of human trafficking. My delegation therefore commends the Dominican Republic for the progress being made in tackling this insidious problem.

Trinidad and Tobago's position on the Dominican Republic's Constitutional Court handed down on September 23rd, 2013 on the nationality of its citizens, mostly of Haitian descent, is a matter of public record and is reaffirmed before this august body. Last November, in her capacity as Chair of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), our Prime Minister stated that the ruling stripped tens of thousands of Dominicans mostly of Haitian descent, of citizenship, so rendering them stateless without recourse to appeal. The Honourable Prime Minister further emphasised that it also violates the Dominican Republic's international human rights obligations, a situation which ought to be corrected with due dispatch.

It is also noted that while the Dominican Republic has experienced steady economic growth over recent years, the level of extreme poverty and inequality remained significantly high.

My delegation therefore recommends the following:

1. That the Dominican Republic takes the necessary political, legislative, judicial and administrative steps to redress most urgently the unacceptable humanitarian situation created by the Constitutional Court ruling;
2. That the Dominican Republic continue its work to prevent the forced labour of women especially in the sugar cane plantations;
3. That action be heightened to mitigate and eventually eliminate extreme social inequalities within the country thereby ensuring equal access by all persons to health care, education and housing;
4. That the Government intensifies their efforts to combat human trafficking.