

Finding Better Solutions: The Role of Social Dialogue

Presented by: Honourable Rennie Dumas
Minister of Labour and Small and Micro
Enterprise Development
Trinidad and Tobago

*Tripartite Caribbean Conference
Kingston, Jamaica
April 2, 2009*



Outline of Presentation

- Crisis with a global reach
- Perspective on social dialogue
- Trinidad and Tobago models
- Nature of social dialogue
- Experiences of other countries
- Critical success factors re: social partnerships
- Concluding thoughts



Crisis with a Global Reach

- Most severe since the Great Depression
- Causes – financial and economic
- Effects – financial, economic, social and labour
- Impacts – differential based on country and time (short, medium and long-term)
- Response – real time, based on facts
- Social dialogue – practical approach to minimizing negative effects



Perspective on Social Dialogue

- Effective and meaningful social dialogue.
- Key questions...



Trinidad and Tobago Models

- Pillar of good governance
- Central to Vision 2020 – long-term development strategy
- No specific standing body or institutional structure exists
- Formal and informal dialogue on specific issues
- Tripartite and Multi-partite Committees:
 - Minimum Wages Board
 - ILO 144 Tripartite Committee
 - Industrial Relations Advisory Committee
 - National Productivity Council



Trinidad and Tobago Models (cont'd)

Tripartite Social and Economic Compact – October 2000

- Declaration of the social partners to address economic and social issues
- Not implemented at that time
- Renewed interest in a social partnership arrangement
- Issues being considered:
 - Form?
 - Scope?
 - Legislation?
 - Institutional structure?



Nature of Social Dialogue

- ILO Definition:

“All types of negotiation, consultation, or simply exchange of information, between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.”

- Goal: To promote consensus building and democratic involvement among the main stakeholders
- Forms: Bi-partite, Tripartite, Tripartite-plus
Formal vs Informal



Experience in Social Partnerships

- Social partnerships:

“A system of formalized co-operation, grounded in legally binding arrangements or informal understandings, co-operative working relationships, and mutually adopted plans among a number of institutions.” (OECD).

- Conducive factors:

- An economic crisis
- External pressure
- A history of collective bargaining

- Eg. Barbados, Ireland, Suriname, St. Vincent, Europe



Critical Success Factors for Social Partnerships



Concluding Thoughts...

- Importance of trust, commitment, focus on national interest and common good of people
- Importance of shared responsibility by partners
- Sustaining social dialogue beyond crisis
- Clear and established structures required
- Strengthening of labour market information systems



Thank You