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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS DELIVERS REMARKS IN HONOR OF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO DIAMOND JUBILEE AND RAISES TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO FLAG**

Commissioner Manuel Castro, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs: Yes. Thank you, Hazra and thank you to the Bowling Green Association for this important partnership. To be able to celebrate and uplift our immigrant communities because immigrants are just as important to the city's economy as any industry represented in Wall Street. So I'd like to specially thank the community organizations and community leaders here today because without them, our city couldn't do the work to support our immigrant communities. So please a round of applause for our community organizations represented here today. Thank you, Hazra, for your leadership in bringing us all here together to celebrate our Trinidadian community. Just a quick edit to my bio. Although I grew up in Sunset Park, I've lived in Flatbush for the last 20 years, and I've always looked forward to September to celebrate with my Caribbean brothers and sisters. And of course, as the commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, I serve proudly with Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom, who is Trinidadian American and is here with us today. So with that, I like to introduce the commissioner of International Affairs, Commissioner Mermelstein.

Commissioner Edward Mermelstein, Mayor's Office of International Affairs: Thank you so much, Commissioner Castro. My name is Edward Mermelstein. I'm the commissioner of international affairs for New York City. And I am happy to join Mayor Adams, members of our administration, Consul General Laveau, all the other consul generals that are here, the Bowling Green Association, and all of you here to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Trinidad and Tobago's Independence. New York is proud to be home to more than half a million Trinidadians and, I'm going to get this right...

Crowd: Tobagonian.

Commissioner Mermelstein: ... Tobagonians. Thank you. Tobagonian nationals and descendants who continue to contribute immensely to this city. Caribbean Americans contribute to our medical care and many, many industries in New York City, including educators, hospitality and service professionals. Caribbean Americans serve as our first responders and police officers and helped to lift the city up during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Caribbean international community has been essential as a partner to our office and we look forward to advancing our relationships. I look forward to working with the consulate, my colleagues, and

the Trinidadians and Tobagonian communities — I'm going to get this right — to achieve Mayor Adams's vision. Congratulations to Trinidad and Tobago on this great, great day celebration of 60 years of independence and thanks to the community for your continued partnership.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, Commissioner Mermelstein. Before I introduce our distinguished guest, I'd like to give a big, big, thank you and shout out to Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson here with us today. I know she shared a few words earlier, but the Bronx borough president has been a tremendous champion of all immigrant communities, especially those asylum seekers that are seeking refuge in our great cities. So thank you, borough president. So with that, I'd like to introduce consul general of Trinidad and Tobago, J. André Laveau, who has served as consul general since 2018 and has served as — in the foreign office since 1993. So consul general, thank you so much.

J. André Laveau, Consul General of Trinidad and Tobago: The honorable Mayor Eric Adams, representative from the office of the governor, Mrs. Padma Seemangal — I think she's here, borough presidents, City Council members. I'd like to recognize especially my ambassador, Ambassador Phillips-Spencer. He's come all the way. He's going to be eight hours on the road just to be here, okay, from Washington and his dear wife, Joanne. I must recognize I have a home to go to. So I have to recognize my own wife, Hayley. She's been at my side always. I've been in the foreign service for 30 years. I have never seen such a long list of salutations, a long list of important people. All of you are so important, so important to Trinidad and Tobago. It's amazing. I know a lot of you here made a big sacrifice to be here. Okay? As Borough President Gibson said, "Trinis work hard." Everybody know how Trini does work, work, work, work, work. All right? We do, we do. When I was in Belgium, I spent about seven years there. I used to tell... Europeans, of course, when they go on holidays, they go for this long period. I say, "We take holidays every single day." We work hard, hard, hard. And then in the evening you chat with our friend. You just unwind and that's what keeps us in. We don't take these big long holidays. So we work hard. We might be an island paradise, but we work hard. Yeah. Talk about hard work. Well, look at this. Couldn't this be more appropriate? Is this a... Yeah, you need to look at that. Nothing...

Laveau: Yeah. Well, nothing describes our mistress of ceremonies like these words right here. And I'm just so grateful to Hazra Ali. She really gets things done. Yeah. 60 years. 60 years is really, really big news. Okay. 60 years, Diamond Jubilee. Yeah, we feeling like diamonds. We got pressure and we are diamonds now. Yeah, we are diamonds. We looking great. Some of y'all look incredible. I mean, all of you look incredible, somewhere between incredible and amazing. You look great. You look great. Yeah. I just want to say a big thank you. I want to say through the honorable Eric Adams, this has been on my heart so much lately. I just want to say on behalf of all Trinidad and Tobago nationals, all hundreds of thousands of us that might be here and all those who have been coming here since, I don't know, since the fifties, sixties, I want to say from Trinidad and Tobago, from the government and people of Trinidad and Tobago to you, Mayor Adams, a big thank you. To the city and the state of New York for welcoming so many Trinbagonians over the last several decades. Thank you very much. I think we need to give applause. We don't take this for granted at all. There's some places where immigrants are welcomed for 50 years, 60 years, and then overnight something happens. And all of a sudden, everything is blamed on them. That doesn't happen here and it will never happen here. Certainly not under this mayor, who we wish a long, long tenure. All right. Don't we?

Crowd: Yeah.

Laveau: Yeah. This is no ordinary mayor as you heard just now. This mayor is a Trini. He's a [inaudible]. He is everything. I think he has a real weak spot for the steelpan. All right? And we love him dearly. So from the consulate to you, I wish you all the best. I must say before I go, in terms of good things to remember, because we have a lot of Caribbean people here. Next year is a massive year for the Caribbean. You know that because CARICOM. CARICOM, our political joining, our political grouping. It's going to be 50 years. All right? Listen, all of us have a duty to celebrate that and make our mark. We want to line these streets. We want to line the airwaves, the television stations, everything and celebrate this thing in the biggest of ways. 75 years. Oh, okay. UWI, any UWI graduates here?

Crowd: Yeah.

Laveau: Yeah. Yeah. All right. So am I. Okay. UWI is 75 years next year. So that is big news, right? Don't forget it. We going to celebrate that. So we love you all. We want all of you back. I know some of you might not be able to stay, but we want all of you back at the consulate because you going to taste it just now. Okay? I don't want to say too much, but we have the most infectious steelpan player anywhere in the world. He is the best. Okay? And he's found a gem, a treasure in Carol Addison. Most of us, many of us grew up listening to Carol Addison. She's an icon. There's so many artists today, they owe their existence, they owe their success to her. They don't even know it. So, Carol, we love you. We're glad you're here. We're glad all of you are here. I just want to continue talking, but I got to be respectful. Okay? Okay. So we love you all. And I must recognize Medgar Evers. Medgar Evers is home to so many Trininis, Trininis and Caribbean people. You've done so well. You've trained so many. Good to see you, Derek [inaudible], the President of the University. Thank you and God bless you. And all my old friends who I haven't seen in 30, 35 years, you know how much I love you. Great to see you. Bless you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much counsel general. And now I'd like to welcome his Excellency Brigadier General Anthony W. J. Phillips-Spencer, Ambassador of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United States and Mexico. Welcome, sir, for a few words.

Anthony Phillips-Spencer, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago: Thank you. Good morning, New York. Honorable mayor, thank you for this welcome. It's good to get away from Washington D.C. I notice you just pop in, but you come back here, very good. Before I start, I was listening to Mr. Luke from Sesame Flyers, and he was trying to understand what happened last night with [inaudible]. Well just let me remind you, when you want to spot a Trini, don't worry, the farewell is longer than the visit. Mr. Mayor, my farewell will not be hastened. Thank you very much for this welcome to New York city.

Phillips-Spencer: I want to acknowledge, please first of all, I think our very, very hard working... I've heard about Hazra Ali for the last couple months and know that she's been doing to help us celebrate the six year anniversary, thank you very much. I want to also acknowledge the presence of the borough president from the Bronx, Borough President Gibson. We've exchanged our contacts. We'll be in touch. Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne

Williams-Isom, all of the other dignitaries and officials from the municipal government across New York City. I must, of course, acknowledge the presence of our CARICOM consul general and other members of our CARICOM consular corps and other members of the consul and if there are any diplomatic corps representatives.

Phillips-Spencer: Distinguish ladies and gentlemen, fellow Trininis, happy 60th anniversary of independence. Mayor Adams, I have the honor to express to you and your entire municipal government and by extension to the governor of New York and the state government, on behalf of all of us and the Trinidad and Tobago diaspora community here in New York. And in case anybody wasn't sure, our largest assembly of Trinidad and Tobago diaspora citizens anywhere in the world including those of us across the United States, our deepest gratitude for this wonderful welcome, this history making occasion that we have a mayor here with us to witness our flag raising ceremony on what is a milestone, memorable, never to be forgot 60th and Diamond Jubilee anniversary of our independence. Thank you, mayor. Thank you.

Phillips-Spencer: The national anthem of Trinidad and Tobago reminds us that our country was forged from the love of liberty. The anthem reinforces our confidence in the approach to life that you see from us, which is inspired in the fires of hope and prayer. And our anthem reinforces that collectively we pursue our interests and our relations with our most enduring partner, the United States, and particularly here in New York City with boundless faith in our destiny. We believe that our destiny is connected deeply to the destiny of New York City. On every occasion when we sing our national anthem and make those solemn declarations, every time we do it as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, we celebrate all that we have achieved, all that we have aspired to during the past 60 years of our journey to nationhood. And let me point out one of our national heroes, one of the members of our country's distinguished society of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, the one and only Lord Nelson is present here with us. That's a national hero.

Phillips-Spencer: During our 60 year journey, many of our citizens have realized their aspirations and achievements right here in New York City. Therefore, be assured honorable mayor, that the people and government of tri Tobago and our large New York City diaspora in this global metropol of our shared strengths of creativity, you'll see that in the next week, diversity and vitality, we place the highest value on advancing and promoting our mature and strong bilateral relations. This milestone Diamond Jubilee anniversary of our independence is being celebrated and commemorated with a focus on the team of forging forward together. That team, if you didn't notice, invokes our love of liberty. And that, I'm sure, is particularly resonant in this heralded land of the free. Our principle, cultural, economic, educational — And at that point I pause to recognize the president of Medgar Evers, good, and our security corporation partner globally. Our team emphasizes also the importance of aspiring. All of us have aspired. In New York City, all of us have aspired and not only have we aspired, we have achieved what we have aspired to together, and that's forcibly reiterated in our national motto.

Phillips-Spencer: One of our nation's greatest achievements is our gift of cultural diplomacy to the world. The steelpan, that instrument has been invented, it was invented and has been continually innovated on in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago during the past century. Reflective of our national motto together with the municipal leadership and the community leadership here in New York City, we have advanced and promoted steelpan music during the past sixty years. You'll see that in the next couple days again. Mayor Adams, your leadership in

promoting the inclusion of the steelpan on the music curriculum in schools in New York City will further strengthen our bilateral relations. Thank you. And I must extend to everyone happy Steelpan Month greetings.

Phillips-Spencer: Together with our investment partners from the U.S. including New York city, Trinidad and Tobago has also led in industrial development with our transformational Point Leases Industrial Port Developmental Estate, and more recently our Phoenix Park Industrial Estate. We've also created many internationally adopted innovations in the natural gas and petrochemical industries. During the last two decades of our independence in this 21st century, our resolve and resilience have been increasingly required and revered amid the newer challenges to our safety and security, to our democracy, to our diversity and sustainability and our creativity and vitality as a shared humanity. This has been very evident during the ongoing pandemic.

Phillips-Spencer: As I conclude, on behalf of the people and government of Trinidad and Tobago, I reiterate our deepest gratitude to you, honorable mayor and the New York City municipal government, to our diaspora leaders many who are recognize here are present today, and to the members and friends of the Trinidad and Tobago diaspora community in New York City. You have been dedicated. You have been devoted to preserving and promoting the rich national heritage of our beloved twin island republic. Again, happy sixtieth independence anniversary. As we celebrate this Diamond Jubilee, be assured honorable mayor, that in forging forward together, Trinidad and Tobago regards New York City as a key partner and a center of gravity for our peace, productivity, and prosperity in the future, amidst the complexity of our shared human experience. May God bless and continue to prosper even further the strong relations that already exist between the United States of America and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly here in New York City. I thank you and happy independence day, again. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, ambassador. And with that, it is my honor to introduce to you, champion of all New Yorkers and the champion of all immigrants whether you arrived here recently or decades ago, the mayor of the City of New York, Mayor Eric Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you so much, and I add my voice to thanking my sister Ali for her contribution and work. This is a significant moment, not only on the jubilee, 60th anniversary, as both the consul general and the ambassador have both indicated, but it's also a moment on all of us and reflection. As we are in the midst of all of the noise, all of the pain, all of the uncertainty, all of the calls from all around. If you are not rooted in something principled and grounded in your religious belief, you will be distracted, and you will be pulled off of your purpose. But if you are focused, if you are driven, if you are true to your purpose, all the noise around you is just deafening. And you don't even hear it because I know my mission, and by the time I finish my run as mayor, you are not only going to see steel bands in our school, you are going to see people that understand communities and places of government to impact the lives of people.

Mayor Adams: No one personifies that more than the Trinidadian community. You do not take from America. You give to America. You have to be on the ground to really analyze and understand the full commitment of the Caribbean diaspora, and those from immigrant groups from across the globe. When businesses closed down during the height of COVID, do you know

what businesses remained open? Immigrant businesses. When people fled the medical system and was not willing to put themselves on the front line, you go look at the Trinidadian Nurses Association, Barbados Nurses Association, Puerto Rican, Dominican Nurses Association. So when I hear people say that they don't understand the fullness and how better we are as a country because of our immigrant population, they just don't get it. And we all came from somewhere. So if someone tell you to go back where you came from, tell them you will when they go back to where they came from. New York is America's city, and this Trinidadian population, the largest in America, is right here. We all know that we are going to march up the Parkway.

Mayor Adams: But it's more than that. It's what you do every day in the area of education, health, small businesses, dealing with mental health issues, law enforcement. You contribute so much to the city and country. I'm proud to be here today at the foot of our business district to raise this flag, but also to raise our spirits. We've allowed COVID to beat us down. We've allowed us to feel as though we're not resilient. We are invincible. Our resiliency is unbelievable. The beauty of our invincibility lies in the uniqueness of this country. This is the only country on the globe where you're told not to abandon your motherland to embrace your new land. You are told just the opposite. Where would we be if we didn't have the diversity of the cultures all coming together to make this unique experience of a humanistic approach of how we live together? We learn from each other.

Mayor Adams: You remove that from the American experience, we're no longer different than any place else. That is our secret weapon. And so, today, when we raise this flag, we raise our consciousness. We send a message across the country, and say, "Governor Abbott, you are not representative of what we represent. You are not representative." We're representative of inclusiveness. We're representative of being a city of immigrants, and a beacon of freedom. We're representative of understanding how we come together. Just like Trinidad, we're made up of many small islands, but we have a big heart, just like Trinidad. When I was in Trinidad and Tobago several years ago, I was blown away about the uniqueness, the friendship, the caring, the loving spirit of the Trinidad people. Even when you pronounce it wrong — [laughter] they still love you. When I had to look at the first time in history bringing together five women deputy mayors, I looked and said, "If I'm going to have the best for the human services aspect of my administration, I need to look towards the Trinidadian community," and I found the amazing Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom to be part of our team.

Mayor Adams: So we are proud to be here together, and grateful you have brought your dreams, ambition and island spirit here. You have contributed so much to the city, and I want to officially recognize you. So now, may I have my proclamation?

Mayor Adams: Now, as the mayor... Come on, ambassador. Come on up. Nothing makes me look better when I'm standing next to two good looking brothers. I proclaim Wednesday, August 31st, 2022, in the City of New York, Trinidad and Tobago Heritage Day. I, Eric Adams, mayor of the City of New York, thank you very much.

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