

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

CCPR OPTIONAL PROTOCOL

RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

(Unless otherwise indicated, the reservations and declarations were made upon ratification, accession or succession)

Reservation:

"[...] Trinidad and Tobago re-accedes to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights with a Reservation to article 1 thereof to the effect that the Human Rights Committee shall not be competent to receive and consider communications relating to any prisoner who is under sentence of death in respect of any matter relating to his prosecution, his detention, his trial, his conviction, his sentence or the carrying out of the death sentence on him and any matter connected therewith.

Accepting the principle that States cannot use the Optional Protocol as a vehicle to enter reservations to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights itself, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago stresses that its Reservation to the Optional Protocol in no way detracts from its obligations and engagements under the Covenant, including its undertaking to respect and ensure to all individuals within the territory of Trinidad and Tobago and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognised in the Covenant (in so far as not already reserved against) as set out in article 2 thereof, as well as its undertaking to report to the Human Rights Committee under the monitoring mechanism established by article 40 thereof."

Note

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago acceded to the Optional Protocol on 14 November 1980. On 26 May 1998 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago informed the Secretary-General of its decision to denounce the Optional Protocol with effect from 26 August 1998. On 26 August 1998, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago re-acceded to the Optional Protocol with a reservation. On 27 March 2000, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago notified the Secretary-General that it had decided to denounce the Optional Protocol for the second time with effect from 27 June 2000.

The Secretary-General received communications from the following States on the dates indicated hereinafter:

Netherlands (6 August 1999);

"1. [...]

2. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is of the view that this reservation, which seeks to limit the obligations of the reserving State towards individuals under sentence of death,

raises doubts as to the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol.

3. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands considers that the purpose of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is to strengthen the position of the individual under the Covenant. Denying the benefits of the Optional Protocol in relation to the Covenant to a group of individuals under the most severe sentence is fundamentally in conflict with the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol.

4. Also the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands considers the procedure followed by Trinidad and Tobago, of denouncing the Optional Protocol followed by a re-accession with reservations, as contrary to the rules of the law of treaties that prohibit the formulation of reservations after ratification. The procedure followed by Trinidad and Tobago circumvents such well-established rules.

5. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore objects to the aforementioned reservation made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

6. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Trinidad and Tobago.”

Germany (13 August 1999);

“The purpose of the Protocol is to strengthen the position of the individual under the Covenant. While the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany welcomes the decision of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to re-accede to the Optional Protocol it holds the view that the benefits of the Optional Protocol should not be denied to individuals who are under the most severe sentence, the sentence of death. Furthermore, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is of the view that denunciation of an international human rights instrument followed by immediate re-accession under a far reaching reservation may set a bad precedent.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany objects to the reservation. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Federal Republic of Germany and Trinidad and Tobago.”

Sweden (17 August 1999);

“The Government of Sweden notes that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago accepts the principle that States cannot use the Optional Protocol as a vehicle to enter reservations to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights itself, and it stresses that its reservations in now way detracts from its obligations and engagements under the Covenant.

Nevertheless the Government of Sweden has serious doubts as to the propriety of the procedure

followed by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in that denunciation of the Optional Protocol succeeded by re-accession with a reservation undermines the basis of international treaty law as well as the international protection of human rights. The Government of Sweden therefore wishes to declare its grave concern over this method of proceeding.

Furthermore the reservation seeks to limit the international obligations of Trinidad and Tobago towards individuals under sentence of death. The Government of Sweden is of the view that the right to life is fundamental and that the death penalty cannot be accepted.

It is therefore of utmost importance that states that persist in this practice refrain from further weakening the position of that group of individuals.”

Ireland (23 August 1999);

“1.[...]

2. The Government of Ireland is of the view that this reservation raises doubts as to the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol, which is to strengthen the position of the individual in respect of the rights protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The reservation on the contrary seeks to limit the international obligations of Trinidad and Tobago towards individuals under sentence of death.

3. The Government of Ireland also has doubts as to the propriety of the procedure followed by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in that denunciation of the Optional Protocol, succeeded by re-accession with a reservation, compromises the ratification process and undermines the International protection of human rights.

4. The Government of Ireland therefore objects to the aforementioned reservation made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

5. The objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between Ireland and Trinidad and Tobago.”

Spain (25 August 1999):

The Government of the Kingdom of Spain believes that this reservation casts doubt on the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol, which is clearly to strengthen the individual's position with respect to the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. On the contrary, the aim of the reservation is to limit the international obligations of Trinidad and Tobago towards individuals under sentence of death.

The Government of the Kingdom of Spain also has reservations about whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has followed the proper procedure; the denunciation of the Optional Protocol,

followed by re-accession to it with a reservation, prejudices the ratification process and undermines the international protection of human rights.

Accordingly, the Government of Spain objects to this reservation made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol as between the Kingdom of Spain and Trinidad and Tobago.

France (9 September 1999):

[...]While article 12, paragraph 1, of the Protocol provides that any State Party may denounce the Protocol "at any time" and that the denunciation shall take effect "three months after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General", the denunciation of the Protocol may in no case be used by a State Party for the sole purpose of formulating reservations to that instrument after having signed, ratified or acceded to it. Such a practice would undermine international commitments by constituting a form of misuse of procedure, would be manifestly contrary to the principle of good faith prevailing in international law and would contravene the rule of *pacta sunt servanda*. The means used (denunciation and accession on the same day to the same instrument, but with a reservation) cannot but prompt a negative reaction, irrespective of the doubts which may arise as to the compatibility of this reservation with the goal and purpose of the treaty.

Consequently, the Government of the French Republic expresses its disapproval of the reservation formulated by Trinidad and Tobago.

Italy (17 September 1999):

"The Government of the Italian Republic finds that the reservation made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago at the time of its re-accession to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights raises doubts as to the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol which is to strengthen the position of the individual in respect of the rights under the Covenant.

The reservation on the contrary seeks to limit the international obligations of Trinidad and Tobago towards individuals under sentence of death. The Government of the Italian Republic also has doubts as to the propriety of the procedure followed by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in that denunciation of the Optional Protocol, succeeded by a re-accession with a reservation compromises the ratification process and undermines the international protection of human rights. The Government of the Italian Republic therefore objects to the aforementioned reservation made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between Italy and Trinidad and Tobago."

(Note 1, Chapter IV.5, Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General)

OBJECTIONS MADE TO STATE PARTY'S RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

Denmark, 6 August 1999

With regard to the reservation made by Trinidad and Tobago upon accession:

"The Government of the Kingdom of Denmark finds that the reservation made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago at the time of its re-accession to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights raises doubts as to the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol.

The reservation seeks to limit the obligations of the reserving State towards individuals under sentence of death. The purpose of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is to strengthen the position of the individual under the Covenant. Denying the benefits of the Optional Protocol to a group of individuals under the most severe sentence is not in conformity with the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol.

The procedure followed by Trinidad and Tobago, of denouncing the Optional Protocol followed by a re-accession with a reservation circumvents the rules of the law of treaties that prohibit the formulation of reservations after ratification. The Government of the Kingdom of Denmark therefore objects to the aforementioned reservation made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago."

Norway, 6 August 1999

With regard to the reservation made by Trinidad and Tobago upon accession:

"The Government of Norway considers that the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol is to contribute to securing the compliance with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by strengthening the position of the individual under the Covenant. Due to the universality of all Human Rights, the right to petition, which is enshrined in article 1 of the Optional Protocol, must apply to all individuals that are subject to the State Party's jurisdiction. Further, denying the benefits of the Optional Protocol in relation to the Covenant to a vulnerable group of individuals will contribute to further weakening of that group's position which the Government of Norway considers to be contrary to the object and purpose of the Optional Protocol.

Further, the Government of Norway is concerned with regard to the procedure followed by Trinidad and Tobago. The Government of Norway considers the denunciation of the Optional Protocol

followed by a re-accession upon which a reservation is entered, as a circumvention of established rules of the law of treaties that prohibit the submission of reservations after ratification.

For these reasons, the Government of Norway objects to the reservation made by Trinidad and Tobago.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Optional Protocol between the Kingdom of Norway and Trinidad and Tobago.

(Ed. note: for other objections, see Note under Reservations and Declarations, above)