

## **Acting PM Winston Dookeran says: National security Govt's top priority**

Published: Thursday, April 18, 2013  
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Acting Prime Minister Winton Dookeran, right, enjoys a moment with the chairman of the United Nations Security Council 1540 Committee Kim Sook after yesterday's opening ceremony for the workshop on Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540–2004. PHOTO: MARCUS GONZALES

Acting Prime Minister Winston Dookeran yesterday reaffirmed the Government's position that tackling crime remained a number one priority. He also called for the development of a "regional security process," saying the matter was not isolated to any one country. The acting prime minister was speaking at the opening ceremony of a three-day workshop on implementing the United Nations Security Council resolution (1540) held at Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre, St Ann's, yesterday.

"Many steps have been taken and will continue to be taken in order to deal with the issues of national security...National security indeed remains the highest priority of the Government," Dookeran assured. Saying all Caribbean countries were interconnected,

Dookeran said it was within that context that at the recent Caricom heads of government, the 14-point plan was introduced to deal with Caribbean security.

He said, however, security must not only be dealt with on a local level but there must be international links to ensure peace and stability. “It is for this reason that we have placed great emphasis in adhering to and in co-operation with all international agencies with the same purpose of developing a sense of support for the measures to protect all societies from the ravages of crime and violence,” Dookeran said.

Earlier yesterday, Dookeran met with National Security Minister Jack Warner and Health Minister Dr Fuad Khan and other key stakeholders to discuss the Government’s commitment to the work of the UN. Saying T&T also recognised the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty as it was there to assist countries, Dookeran said this country’s economy was at risk at times because of its “petrochemical nature.”

“Our economy is at risk at times because of a transshipment port in the Caribbean and Latin America and therefore the issues of biological and chemical warfare is something which we always have to be concerned about,” he said. Dookeran said the workshop would seek to find ways in which T&T could handle these issues and to mitigate the risk with such events taking place.

*(Trinidad & Tobago Guardian Online)*