

Let us go forward in unity

WE SEE flags and buntings in our national colours red, white and black adorning buildings throughout the country. It is an indication that our nation's independence anniversary is nigh. However, this year is not like any other year, it is Trinidad and Tobago's diamond jubilee anniversary. It is a suitable time for us to reflect on what we prioritise as a society and decide if this is the path we would like to continue traversing together.

Six decades have gone by since we were free at last to make our own laws, determine our identity and chart the direction we want for our society. To understand our fledgling nation's hopes and aspirations for its future, we can look to our national motto, Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve; our nation's watchwords, Discipline, Production and Tolerance; and key words in our national anthem that say, "Here every creed and race finds an equal place." It is evident that as a young and free nation, our leaders were also wise and understood that to move forward as a nation we must do it together, unified across our differences.

The Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) is, therefore, critical to our nation's development and a guide for us to continue to aspire to the ideal of inclusivity and equal opportunities and treatment for all.

To a large extent, we as a nation have been able to achieve this and the EOC's independence campaign this year focuses on "Real Unity," acknowledging



what some societies seem inept at doing, and that's focusing on the positive strides we have made, together. We are

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asking members of the public to upload to Instagram a photo or video that they captured or made that shows "real unity" in the status grounds covered by the Equal Opportunity Act, which are race, ethnicity, religion, origin (including geo-

graphic origin), disability, sex and marital status.

It is impactful to gather data in one place to show the true enormity of our unity. These are not just photos and videos, these are stories reflected in a moment or moments that we all have to share about that time when we didn't see colour, a person's gender or even the person's origin.

In our country, it is more common than not to strike up a friendly conversation with a stranger, "form a crew" with random people in a Carnival band or event, or even hug someone in a cricket match when West Indies clinches an edge-of-the-seat win; all of whom have different backgrounds to you. But in that moment, you were all Trinidadians/Tobagonians, cognisant only of your similarities.

This is not a national identity that we should take for granted. In some parts of the world the relative peace and unity we enjoy in Trinidad is only a dream to others.

The EOC is committed to ensuring that we evolve into a society that focuses on our positive progress and reduces the reports of intolerance and unity that threaten to divide us. Do we have work to do as a nation? Sure! However, let us do something different this independence. Let us take a moment to appreciate the unity that exists in our nation and recommit to the vision of our forefathers, so we can go forward in unity, just as they dreamed, for the future of our twin-island republic.