



**Sport Studies and Higher Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach**

**Physical Literacy: Gender, Science and Sport for Development**

**Opening Remarks by Professor Rhoda Reddock**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2016**

**LRC. 6:30 p.m.**

**Salutations**

- **Mr. Michael Phillips**, Chair, Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago,
  - **Other Representatives of the Ministries of Sport and Youth Affairs and SportTT**
  - **Associate Professor Dean Kriellaars**, College of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Manitoba, our Keynote Speaker,
  - **Ms. Catherine Forde**, Representative, First Citizens Sports Foundation,
  - **Major David Benjamin**, Director, Sports, Fitness and Athletic Development Unit, UWI, St. Augustine,
  - **Representatives of National Sporting Associations,**
  - **Members of the Conference Planning Committee**
  - **UWI Colleagues- Staff and Students,**
  - **A special welcome to our overseas- regional and international participants, local presenters and participants, specially invited guests, ladies and gentlemen,**
- Good Evening.

## **Welcome**

As Deputy Principal of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus and Chair of the Conference Planning Committee, it is truly an honour and privilege to welcome all participants to the opening ceremony of the second Biennial conference on Sports and Higher Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach with the theme Physical Literacy, Gender, Science and Sport for Development, a collaboration of The University of the West Indies and the First Citizens Sports Foundation. In 2014, we had the privilege of hosting a historic path-breaking and very successful inaugural conference, which provided a unique opportunity to hear from academics and practitioners on research, the challenges and the way forward in the field of Sport Studies locally, regionally and internationally. We at UWI-St. Augustine are proud to once again be the hosts of this conference which we anticipate will be just as positive as the first conference.

I would like to acknowledge this evening's feature speaker Associate Professor Dean Kriellaars, College of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Manitoba. We look forward to hearing from you this evening. Let me also especially welcome those participants who are at the conference for the first time and those who are returning. I am particularly happy to see that our conference has attracted such a large and diverse group of local, regional and international speakers and participants, combining intellectual brilliance with practical experience.

## **The UWI's Commitment to Sport**

The University of the West Indies is committed to developing higher levels of competence and performance in the field of sport and use opportunities to promote research in sports and sports as a means of social and community intervention within society. Our current Vice-Chancellor, Sir Hilary Beckles has expressed his commitment

to developing sports within the region with a vision for the University to become more recognised regionally and internationally as a centre for sports excellence. In showing this commitment, this year the inaugural UWI Vice-Chancellor's Sports Awards was hosted on this campus on April 27<sup>th</sup>, where some of our best student-athletes across the four Campuses of The University of the West Indies including St. Augustine, Cave Hill, Mona and the Open Campus were nominated and two honoured for their outstanding performance in academics, athletics, service and leadership. The Vice-Chancellor also announced that efforts are underway to establish a Faculty of Sport at The UWI.

Additionally, since the last Sports Conference, we continue to work on expanding our programme offerings so that in addition to the existing programmes at this campus- the post-graduate diploma and M.Sc. Sports Management and the Certificate in Art and Science of Coaching at this campus, we have been actively working on offering a B.Ed Physical Education. We are very pleased that this progress has been made toward the development of our region.

### **Vision, Aim and Philosophy of the Conference**

Our conference this week is another opportunity for advancing in the field of Sport Studies at the tertiary education level in the Caribbean region. Sport is an integral part of the culture of the region and increasingly so in this season on the heels of the West Indies women and men teams' dominance of World T20 cricket and of course, the highly anticipated 2016 Rio Olympics where the region's top athletes will compete in the most elite sporting event. We want to continue to emphasize the importance of incorporating an academic approach to our region's sports culture. It is our vision that this conference will help to promote a sustainable scientific approach to sport development in the Caribbean. Through the research and discussion arising out of the conference, we aim to develop strategies and mechanisms for the investigation, analysis

and dissemination of information of physical education and sport in the Caribbean region.

A guiding principle of the theme and sub-themes this year is the need for focused needs assessment and evidence-based research rooted in the culture of the Caribbean. We looked at the trends and needs within the region and discovered that along with an increased interest in professional and amateur sport within the region, physical fitness and regular exercise have become a priority focus of regional governments' health campaigns and a major aspect of the average citizen's lifestyle. As the title of the conference suggests, we believe that physical literacy is the foundation of both participation and excellence in physical activity and sport. In fact, our feature speaker this evening, Dr. Kriellaars, will share on this topic "Physical literacy: performance enhancement and durability by design."

### **Gender Equality in Sport**

The focus on sport and fitness at both the professional and recreational levels has highlighted continued gendered disparities in access and equality. As in many parts of the world, there may be an increase in the participation of women in sporting activities but this has not necessarily translated into an increase in gender equality. A case in point, in the Caribbean, from 1806 when cricket clubs were first established in the region at St Anne's in Barbados until 2000, women were not accepted as members of Cricket Clubs in the region; although the Women's West Indies team made its Test debut in 1976. It was at a two-day conference on Regional Cricket, co-hosted by CARICOM and the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Barbados<sup>1</sup> that a resolution "that gender discrimination within the cricket Institutions of the region be immediately

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<sup>1</sup> CARICOM/UWI Regional *Cricket Conference* which was held at the Cave Hill Campus in Barbados from 31 May to 2 June, 2000.

abolished and that all cricket clubs should implement a policy of encouraging female membership” was passed.

Although the gender gap is closing, there are still many areas that need to be addressed and we hope that now and in the future, through dialogue in these conferences and collaboration with stakeholders, we can begin to help to create, monitor and evaluate the implementation of a gender policy in sport governing bodies in the region.

### **Inter-disciplinary Approach to Sports Studies**

Again, for this conference, the need for and the potentially great benefits of a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approach to Sports Studies is underscored. It is through interdisciplinary academic collaboration among sport scientists, psychologists, sociologists, historians, coaches, management specialists, athletes and economists, to name a few, that the sporting industry can work together to provide the best possible united approach to the challenges which face sport in the region. Over the next two days we will engage in presentations and participate in discussions on Exercise, Training and Physical Development; Sport, Business and Economics; Sport for Development; History, Psychology of Sport; Women, Gender and Sport; Physical Education and Athletic Development; Rehabilitation and Performance; Sport, Media and Technology; Diet and Nutrition- Youth and Student Athletes; and Caribbean Sport and Anti-Doping.

All of the themes aim to critically reflect on these areas and issues by bringing together national, regional and international research. It is hoped that we can continue to develop a body of Caribbean oriented knowledge and scholarship that addresses and seeks to improve these issues in our region. The discussions and research presented at the inaugural conference widened our understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of sport in the region and I have no doubt that this year’s presentations will

do the same. We hope that this conference would again aid in fostering collaborations among regional and international institutions, which could act as a platform for more research and development in the area of Sport Studies within Trinidad and Tobago, the UWI and the Caribbean region. I encourage each of the participants to explore how we can work together to move forward in research and effecting positive change in this region.

## **Conclusion**

As we all know, a forum for these discussions and presentations of this nature is very complex and challenging. As such, I would like to thank our platinum sponsors and collaborator, First Citizens Sports Foundation which has partnered with us throughout the process, the Ministry of Sport, The Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago, our Marketing and Communications Department and the Sports, Fitness and Athletic Development Unit, UWI, St. Augustine. I would also like to recognize all members of the conference planning committee, many of whom you will meet this evening and throughout the conference, as well as the various UWI-St. Augustine departments who have worked and continue to work tirelessly on the details of this conference. I would also like to give a special mention to Ms. Kyome Pascall, the Conference Organizer and Ms. Camille Charles of the Office of the Deputy Principal. It is my hope that by the end of this second conference, we will have narrowed the gaps on several sporting issues, and created a roadmap for what actions need to be taken to improve Sport Studies within our region.

In concluding, let me reiterate my sincere hope that this conference will result in success and with your cooperation we will be able to establish strong links among participants and respective institutions. I hope that you enjoy your short visit to Trinidad and

Tobago, especially your time at the UWI St. Augustine Campus. I wish each of you a rewarding and satisfying experience throughout the Conference.

Thank you.