



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

Remarks by Prof Brian Copeland, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Launch of “Celebrating the Past; Looking to the Future”

Thursday 16th February, 2017

10a.m.

Salutations

- Minister of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development in the Government of St. Lucia, the Honourable Dr. Gale Rigobert
 - Members of the Diplomatic Corps (and we do recognize the representatives from Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Panama, Spain and Suriname)
 - Distinguished Alumni of the Institute, including:
 - His Excellency Brigadier General Anthony Philips-Spencer, Trinidad and Tobago’s Ambassador to the United States of America
 - Ambassador Sandra Honore, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
 - Justice Mira Dean-Armorer; and
 - Judge Anthony Lucky
 - And of course, the Director of the Institute of International Relations, Professor Jessica Byron

 - Other Distinguished IIR alumni
 - Co-authors – Dr. Mark Kirton and Dr. Khellon Roach
 - Other Colleagues of The UWI St. Augustine Campus and the Institute of International Relations in particular
 - Specially Invited Guests
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- Members of the Media
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning,

There once was a popular television series that dramatized key historical events so that viewers felt they were actually present as history was being made. Twenty-first century technology allows us to gain a similar, more vivid, experience through interactive holograms.

Drs Mark Kirton and Khellon Roach have managed to do the same in their book, ‘A History of the Institute of International Relations: 50 Years and Beyond’.

In bringing IIR’s history to life, they have given us the context in which to see the how and the why of it all. We are in fact there as we see Dr Eric Williams on his quest to Switzerland in June 1962. A visionary with a mind for details, Dr Williams understood the absolute need for this kind of expertise as he prepared to lead a tiny, island-nation to Independence. It would have been in the forefront of his thought two years later, knowing that continued statehood is won on the diplomatic battlefield and his was a country with little or no ammunition in this regard.

So, we are given an understanding of the historical context and look on with awe as Switzerland and Trinidad and Tobago began the forging of a graduate Institute of International Relations when the two countries signed an international agreement in 1966. This vision would be realised as an independent, autonomous, academic institution, affiliated with The University of the West Indies.

The Swiss contributed both financially and through intellectual expertise, giving us our first two Directors – Professors Ulrich Haeflin and Roy Preiswerk. Haitian-born Professor Leslie Manigat would become the first Caribbean Director in 1974. Fourteen years later, he would become President of Haiti.

This regional University certifies IIR's academic programme and confers its degrees. In line with this regionalism, the IIR adopted a new constitution in 1972 and fully embraced its regional character with Barbados, Guyana, and Jamaica joining Trinidad and Tobago in financing the Institute.

Indeed, many graduates have risen in the diplomatic service within the Caribbean. I recognise such alumni as His Excellency Brigadier David A. Granger, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana; Professor Sir Kenneth Hall, former Governor-General of Jamaica and Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of The UWI Mona Campus; and the late Ambassador Henry Gill, former Director-General of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery. There were also Mr. Desmond Parker, former Chief of Protocol of the United Nations; the Honourable Orville London, former Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly; and Ambassador Sandra Honore, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

Certainly, when you read this book, you will obtain an appreciation for the magnitude of IIR's reach, regionally and internationally, in the last five decades.

The St. Augustine Campus is proud to have been the IIR's host as well as its partner in many undertakings, over these 50 years.

No one could disagree that the IIR finds itself even more relevant today than in the mid-20th century. There is a proliferation of issues that need critical examination, analysis, and intervention from a Caribbean perspective. I refer specifically to climate change, migration, human trafficking, human rights, global health, crime and security, terrorism, and - more recently - BREXIT and Trump Diplomacy. Ladies and gentlemen, these are just the top of the bucket.

IIR continues to go the distance for this Caribbean region, establishing and maintaining a knowledge base for the formulation and conduct of international relations.

Its commitment to training each generation of diplomats led to the establishment of the *Diplomatic Academy of the Caribbean* in May 2014. This was achieved with the active support of the Trinidad and Tobago government and a joint planning team made up of the IIR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The UWI, and the United Nations Development Programme. Particular thanks are due to Professor Andy Knight, then Director of the Institute, who painstakingly worked through seemingly innumerable obstacles and challenges, and yet prevailed. Already, the Diplomatic Academy has run programmes in other islands of the Caribbean, taking expertise on the road and widening access to critical information and knowledge.

So, from a small training institution with a single classroom and just about 14 students has come a globally recognized regional centre for the analysis and advancement of international relations. It is a lesson for all of us. There is nothing of which we are not capable – once we have the commitment and the will.

I commend Mark and Khellon – this first written history has undoubtedly added to the legacy of the Institute of International Relations – and I thank Professors Andy Knight and Jessica Byron for their support of this project. Professor Byron also made history in 2016 when she became the IIR's first female Director. Welcome.

On behalf of The University of the West Indies, particularly the St. Augustine Campus, I would like to wish the IIR continued success in all of its endeavours.

The rest of the story is up to us and, through the perspective revealed in this book in just seven chapters, we are re-invigorated to claim the future.

Thank you.