

Speaking Points for Mrs. Catherine Kumar
CEO, Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce

UWI Research Expo – Media Launch

Thursday 5th September, 2013

10:00am

Salutations

Pro Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Professor Wayne Hunte

Pro Vice Chancellor and Campus Principal, Professor Clement Sankat

President of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, Mr. Indar Maharaj

Senior Programme Manager in the Office of the Campus Principal, Mrs. Stacy Richards-Kennedy

Specially Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Introductory Remarks

- **Good morning!**

- **It is with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation to bring remarks at this Media Launch and to express the full support of the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce for the UWI St. Augustine Campus' Research Expo 2013! I would like to thank the Campus Principal, Professor Clement Sankat and his team for inviting me. The Research Expo is an**

initiative that the Chamber fully endorses as it will help to put a spotlight on the central role played by research in private sector development and entrepreneurship and in building the competitiveness for our country.

- I am aware that the staff and students of the UWI St. Augustine Campus conduct research in diverse areas across its many Faculties and in so doing, help to expand the body of knowledge about issues that are indigenous to Trinidad and Tobago and our Caribbean region. This is vital to our development process.**

- **I understand that the expo will show case research exhibits from across the faculties.**

- **But before I continue, allow me to commend one of the Chamber members the National Gas Company (NGC) of Trinidad and Tobago, led by its President, Mr. Indar Maharaj for sponsoring this Research Expo. I must say that this is an excellent example of what the chamber would like to see more of in Trinidad and Tobago, and that is, business partnering with the university**

and driving the research and innovation in fields that will benefit business.

- **Only yesterday the Arthur Lock Jack Graduated school of Business launched the results of the world Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2013. I am afraid to say that while we improved in some areas it was not at all a happy story. We continue to rank low in the innovation and sophistication pillars at 92 out of 148 countries.**

- **So in fact, as this Research Expo 2013 is launched, it is an opportune moment for us to underscore the importance of strengthening the linkages between academia, the private sector and the public sector as we promote creativity and innovation and work together to improve our competitiveness as a country.**

- **The university cannot do it alone, nor can government, neither can industry. In the current economic environment – research, development and innovation can only be achieved through**

partnership and collaboration between the major players: University-Industry-Government.

All stakeholders must invest their ideas, efforts and resources wholeheartedly and in a coordinated manner, if we are to make a difference. Such a system in which bilateral relations between governments and university, academia and industry and governments and industry are expanded into triadic relationships has often been referred to as the “triple helix” model.

Support from the T&T Chamber of Industry and Commerce

- For many years, the Chamber's member institutions have worked closely with the UWI St. Augustine Campus to advance its research through funding and other forms of collaboration. However, if we truly wish to position ourselves as an innovation driven economy and reap the rewards, both the private and public sectors need to invest much more.

This is the only way we will be able to achieve sustained progress.

- **I would therefore like to encourage all members of the business sector and in particular the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce members to engage the UWI St. Augustine Campus and to reach out to the university as your partner in business through its research and development activities. It is an investment that will help take our private sector forward and help us improve our rankings in the**

Innovation pillar and hence increase our competitiveness as a country. As a Chamber whose vision is to be “the voice of business”, we know all too well that diversification of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago is not an option, it is a priority! And one of the ways in which we can achieve diversification of our economy is by supporting relevant research that can result in new products, services, policies, and processes which will increase the productivity of the country.

Concluding Remarks

- **So as I close, let me once again congratulate the UWI St. Augustine Campus on this very innovative approach to showcasing its research and for all their efforts at sharing with the public and private sectors, potential investors in research commercialization activities and the public at large, the many ways in which UWI research contributes to developing Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region. I would also like to commend the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago, led by its President, Mr.**

Indar Maharaj for supporting the UWI and its research. It is my hope that this partnership between the UWI St. Augustine Campus and the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago would encourage many other corporate entities to support university research, innovation and knowledge transfer. In this way, the private sector would play its part in ensuring that research not only responds to but also anticipates the needs of society and improves the lives of the people in our country.

- **Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you and wish you great success in this pioneering venture for The University of the West Indies.**