

**Address by Campus Principal Professor Clement Sankat
At 60 – The Gala**

Friday 12 December, 2008 – 6.00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain

- Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Sir George Alleyne
- Vice Chancellor, Professor E. Nigel Harris
- Chairman of our Campus Council, Mr. Michael Mansoor
- Members of University Council
- Other Honourable Ministers of the Government in Trinidad & Tobago and those from the Region
- Members of Parliament
- Pro Vice Chancellors and Campus Principals
- University Registrar, Mr. C. William Iton
- Members of our St. Augustine Campus Management Team
- Representatives of the UWI Guild of Students and the Alumni Association
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Distinguished Members of the Business Industry
- Esteemed colleagues of the St. Augustine, Mona, Cave Hill and Open Campuses
- Honoured Guests
- Family and Friends
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening.

It is with gratitude and humility that I accepted the invitation extended by the 60th Anniversary Committee and the Gala Fundraising Committee to deliver Opening and Welcome Remarks this evening at the close of our University's 60th Anniversary Celebrations.

Let me begin by expressing my thanks, on behalf of the St Augustine Campus of The University of the West Indies, for what has been a wonderful celebration over the year 2008, a year in which I also assumed the Principalship of the St Augustine Campus. In January, the UWI St Augustine Campus officially launched these 60th Anniversary Celebrations with the proclamation of **UWI Day** on January 7th, with the blessing of His Excellency Professor George Maxwell Richards, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago—who is a former St Augustine Campus Principal and former Dean of Engineering, and of course our kind patron for **60 - The Gala**.

In that very same media launch in January, our Campus also declared the official launch of the Year of Sir Arthur Lewis. And so, with these two years happily coinciding in this way, I have sometimes found

myself, in the midst of the **joyful** festivities of the 60th Anniversary, **quietly** reflecting on Sir Arthur and the other founding fathers of our University, who had the courage to invest so much of their lives into the fledgling institution in 1948. Even as I stand here this evening, a part of me is still wondering whether our University of today, 2008, has lived up to **their** dreams of 60 years ago. In the final analysis, I think that we have met their expectations—and this is something that I said publicly on the previous occasion of my own ceremonial inauguration as Campus Principal in October of this year. I strongly suspect that, were they alive today, Sir Arthur and the founding fathers would be overjoyed by what our institution has achieved to date. I honestly believe that we have surpassed their hopes.

But while this has been a year in which we have celebrated the achievements of the last six decades, it has also been a year in which we have sat and witnessed the perplexity of global leaders in the face of global **food** and **energy** crises. It has been a year in which we have closely observed massive shifts in the global **financial** climate, to say nothing of the more subtle **physical** climate changes which pose a clear and present threat to our way of life here in the Caribbean. And

so, tonight, if we are joyful, it is not because we fool ourselves. We know that tomorrow will come with its own array of challenges to be overcome. And we can only imagine what breed of difficult and interrelated challenges will confront our children. But while we celebrate this evening, we also embrace our responsibility, as **the** regional University, to prepare collaborative and innovative regional responses to the global problems of this new age.

Therefore, amidst the liquid celebrations of the evening, perhaps there is a dimension of this evening that is reserved for very **(Pause)** **sober** reflection. We know that the thinking systems of the 20th century will not solve the complex problems of the 21st century. For this reason, our new five-year Strategic Plan is aimed at harnessing the massive brain-power, research-capacity and innovative potential of the region's premier tertiary education and leveraging all of those resources to the service of the region whose people make our very existence and continued success possible.

As this evening signals the end of a prolonged season of celebration and reflection on the last 60 years, our hope is in the people of the

Caribbean Diaspora. Our great hope is in **you**. It is for **you** that this University has tirelessly laboured since its inception and it is **you** whom we will continue to serve faithfully for the next six decades, and many more to come. One of our main goals this year has been to broaden, to strengthen and to deepen our network of alliances with **you**, the people of this region, with your businesses, with your governments and, perhaps most importantly, with your children.

In 2008, against the backdrop of the proud tradition of the 70,000-plus graduates who have made their way through the hallways of our institution, we have gone after new partnerships with **you**. We partnered with TSTT to profile the University on this year's Directory. We worked alongside TTPost to publish a set of collectible UWI 60th Anniversary commemorative stamps, even as our Main Library has made available a set of UWI 60th Anniversary commemorative postcards. We worked with our publishing houses and booksellers to host our Book Fair. We partnered with several prestigious institutions, including the Caribbean Development Bank, to deliver a series of lectures on the life and legacy of Sir Arthur Lewis. We kept our Alumni at the centre of our attention highlighting

some who have done us proud over the years and honouring those who have laboured to build a strong Alumni Association. Through our Family Day, we remembered our staff and their contribution to this institution. Behind all this activity has been the single urgent call for **you**—the hardworking and responsible stakeholders in the future of our region—to rally together and join with us, as our University takes a leading role in navigating the pathways through the complex issues facing our region at this time. We remain committed to assessing **your** needs, to championing the execution of affordable solutions to **your** problems.

Therefore, in closing, it behoves me to thank all of you gathered here this evening, because you represent the many and diverse **stakeholders** who have demonstrated an enduring concern for the continued development of our region.

To all of the representatives of the **governments** of the Caribbean region;

to all of the **corporate citizens** of the Caribbean;

to all of our **staff, faculty**, and past and present **students**;

to every **institution** and **individual** who has in some way contributed to this evening's dramatic culmination to these yearlong celebrations;

to Professor Winston **Mellowes**, Chair of the 60th Anniversary Committee and to his hardworking team;

to Professor Gurmohan **Kochhar**, Chair of the Gala Fundraising Committee, who worked tirelessly with his team to make this evening possible;

I thank you. On behalf of the UWI St Augustine Campus, **I thank you.**

Last but **certainly** not least, to all of **you** who have graced us with your presence at **60 - The Gala** this evening. By your very presence, you have already left thumbprint in the records of our institutional history, and I thank you. Beyond this evening's sumptuous cuisine and the delightful entertainment, it is **your** presence and **your** participation that promises to make this evening a memory to last a lifetime. May God bless you all.

I thank you.

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