

**Professor Clement Sankat  
Pro Vice Chancellor and Campus Principal  
Sir Arthur Lewis Memorial Conference**

**Learning Resource Centre  
Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2008  
9:00 a.m.**

Thank you, Chair.

- Your Excellency Professor George Maxwell Richards, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago,
- Deputy Principal, Professor Rhoda Reddock,
- Members of Campus Management,
- Dr Compton Bourne, Professor Emeritus and former St Augustine Campus Principal
- Dr. Hamid Ghany, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences,
- Professor Dennis Pantin, Head of the Department of Economics,
- Dr Patrick Watson, Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies,

- Professor Timothy Shaw, Director of the Institute of International Relations,
- Distinguished colleagues from our own Faculty of Social Sciences, and all our other Faculties
- Distinguished colleagues and students from our sister campuses in Mona, Jamaica and Cave Hill, Barbados
- Scholars, policy makers, researchers and graduate students from other universities from the Caribbean region and beyond,
- Members of the media,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

Let me begin by welcoming all of you to this Opening Session of our Sir Arthur Lewis Memorial Conference. The title of this conference, as you know, is 'Development Challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. I cannot help but observe that this all-encompassing title, ambitious

as it may seem, actually speaks to the comprehensive nature of our approach to problem-solving here at The University of the West Indies. The range and scope of topics tabled for discussion, debate and analysis over the next three days is impressive. I dare say that were he alive today, Sir William Arthur Lewis, would be proud. As you know, Sir Arthur was the first West Indian Vice Chancellor & Principal of The University of the West Indies.

As St Augustine Campus Principal, believe me when I say that I am very aware of how daunting it can be even to attempt to follow in the footsteps of so great a man. But if I may be so bold as to throw down the gauntlet here at the start of this conference, I would like to challenge all of you to make good on the title of this conference. I challenge you to make this conference a meeting of minds that surpasses Sir Arthur, not just in terms of depth of perception and thoroughness of analysis but also in scope of accomplishment. Many of you know me—I am not a gambling man—but my bet is that the

awesome collection of minds gathered here in this conference is up to the challenge, although it will be a very difficult one to meet.

**OPTIONAL**

Speaking of awesome minds, I think I saw my colleague from the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Brian Copeland here. Prof Copeland, who has succeeded me as the Dean of Engineering, was recently conferred the country's highest national award, the Order of Trinidad and Tobago, for his groundbreaking research into steelpan technology.

Sir Arthur, as I previously mentioned, was the first West Indian Vice Chancellor & Principal, the first UWI Principal under UWI's independent Charter, and the first West Indian and black man to receive a Nobel Prize. He became Director of the Caribbean Development Bank in 1970, was knighted in 1963, and won the Nobel Prize in 1979. When he died in 1991, he was buried on the

grounds of the St Lucia Community College named in his honour. Of course, here at the Trinidad Campus, we also have an Institute named after this great Caribbean man—the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES).

In fact, let me take a moment here and recognise Dr Patrick Watson, Director of SALISES. Dr Watson is always flying the UWI flag high over at SALISES.

***(Pause)***

I would also like to recognise Professor Dennis Pantin, Head of the Department of Economics, and Professor Timothy Shaw, Director of the Institute of International Relations, without whose contributions, today's conference would not have been a reality.

***(Pause)***

Finally, I will, of course, invite you to recognise our chair, Dr. Hamid Ghany, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

***(Pause)***

You know, when the Faculty of Social Sciences does something this big on our campus, it really has a wide impact. The 2008 incoming class is one of the largest ever at the St Augustine Campus—the overall figure was somewhere over 4,000 and reaching towards 4,500. And out of that total, 1,134 of our undergraduates are enrolled in the Faculties of Social Sciences. That's a full 25% of our student intake in your Faculty, Dean! I think I just did some Statistics! Did I pass?

***(Pause)***

Anyway, when you look at the numbers, you can see why it is always very important to this campus when our Social Sciences Faculty mobilizes in such a significant way as we are doing here this weekend.

As some of you already know, this Conference is a part of our Year of Sir Arthur Lewis, which I launched in January 2008, in my first

public address as Campus Principal. The Year of Sir Arthur Lewis, which is a celebration of his life and works, is part of the University's ongoing Nobel Laureate Celebrations, which started in 2007 and which will continue until 2009. In April 2007, Trinidad-born Nobel Laureate Sir V.S. Naipaul, was a guest of honour at the St. Augustine campus. Sir V.S. Naipaul is undoubtedly one of the region's most celebrated writers, awarded the Trinity Cross in 1989, knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1990, and awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001.

I would also take this opportunity to remind you that the University plans to celebrate the life and works of Derek Walcott in 2009.

Walcott, who is an alumnus of our campus here in St Augustine, received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992. He was also awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 1988, the Trinity Cross in 1993 and the Italian Premio Grinzane Cavour in 2006.

Through their exceptional achievement, Sir Vidia, Sir Arthur and Derek Walcott have become enduring icons of the value of the pursuit of excellence. And so, our aim, through all these activities, is to set before the region a standard of thought and achievement that is both very high and very achievable. We aim, not only to engage your minds with rich discussion and stimulating debates, but also to inspire you to re-engage your spheres of engagement with a renewed sense of purpose and engagement that will endure long after our Year of Sir Arthur Lewis, and indeed this conference, is over.

On that note, and in conclusion, let me just point out that this Year of Sir Arthur Lewis coincides quite nicely with our yearlong 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations. I would like to take this opportunity to state publicly and very proudly that all proceeds from all UWI 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary initiatives will be channelled into a special UWI Regional Endowment Fund, which will facilitate infrastructural

projects across the region. On that note, let me remind you that, as the culmination of the university's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, the St. Augustine Campus will host a gala black-tie dinner at the Hyatt on December 12th, 2008.

Well, I think I've said enough; I don't want to overstay my welcome here. Just to say, in closing that this Conference, coming as it does in the midst of the Year of Sir Arthur Lewis and the year of our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, makes me very confident that once we keep our minds open to the lessons of the last sixty years, that The University of the West Indies is poised to produce many more Naipauls and Lewises and Walcotts over the next six decades to come. I thank you.