



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

OFFICE OF THE CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Clement Sankat, BSc (UWI), MSc (UWI), PhD (Guelph), FIAgrE, CEng, FAPETT

The Cropper Foundation Distinguished Lecture Series on the Environment

(3rd Lecture) Delivered by Mr. Mervyn Claxton

‘Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development’

Engineering Lecture Theatre 1, Block 13, UWI St. Augustine

Wednesday September 1st 2010 6.30 pm

Opening Remarks

Salutations

- Thank you Chair, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, Professor Dyer Narinesingh
- Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and the Environment, Mr. Isaac James
- President of The Cropper Foundation, Mr. Winston Rudder
- Professor Norman Girvan, Board of Trustees, The Cropper Foundation
- Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education, Professor Funso Aiyejina
- Mr. Mervyn Claxton - our very Distinguished Lecturer this evening
- Members of Campus Management and Colleagues
- Specially Invited Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening.

- It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus for the 3rd Lecture of the Cropper Foundation Distinguished Lecture Series on the Environment. Let me begin by thanking the President of the Cropper Foundation, Mr. Winston Rudder and the rest of the Cropper Foundation family for allowing us - the UWI St. Augustine Campus to share in your celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Cropper Foundation.
- Ten years is a significant milestone in the life of any organization. During these ten years I must say that the Cropper Foundation has earned the reputation of one of the most fervent promoters of sustainable development policy and practice - not only locally but also regionally and internationally. In this context it is also fitting that this evening's lecture be delivered by none other than Mr. Mervyn Claxton. Not only is Mr. Claxton a well-established academic but he is also a well respected practitioner in the field of sustainable development. A special warm welcome to you Mr. Claxton. It is truly a privilege to have you address us this evening on the topic of '*indigenous knowledge and sustainable development*' – I look forward to your lecture.
- Let me also take this opportunity to commend the Ministry of Housing and the Environment for their promotion of sustainable development in its broadest

sense and more specifically its direct collaboration with the Cropper Foundation and the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, UWI St. Augustine Campus in support of making this lecture an activity that observes this year as the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB).

- The International Year of Biodiversity is being celebrated by countries all over the world to raise public awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the devastating consequences of its loss. The implications of environmental challenges such as Climate Change and Global Warming to biodiversity are global and thus certainly underscore that these problems cannot be resolved by individual economies on their own. Regional and international cooperation is clearly necessary for raising public awareness. This lecture is therefore testament of the meaningful and tangible collaboration that is possible among academia, the public sector and civil society which raises the consciousness of our people. To this end, the UWI St. Augustine Campus is truly honoured to provide a platform for issues of national, regional and international importance demonstrating to the wider community the valuable contribution we make as a tertiary level institution to shaping the national and regional development agenda.

- It is indeed important for all nations to strike a balance between the efforts to increase the pace of socio-economic development and to ensure conservation of natural resources. This is the fundamental motive behind the International Year of Biodiversity as declared by the United Nations. In fact, this whole issue of biodiversity and sustainable development is critical to small island developing states as we continue to work towards implementing strategies for addressing economic growth and competitiveness, while at the same time, seeking to maintain the delicate balance with achieving sustainable and equitable development and fostering a better quality of life for our citizens. This is how we as a nation and as a region can achieve **true** sustainable development. Universities have an important role to play here and this is what we are committed to as a UWI Campus.
- The Cropper Foundation's cooperation with the public and private sector at all levels, its efforts to increase public awareness and understanding of sustainable development and environmental issues are excellent examples of how any organization can contribute to the overall development of a country and by extension a region.

- Once again congratulations to the Cropper Foundation on its 10th anniversary and its success in promoting sustainable development across a range of disciplines and sectors in the Caribbean region. You are indeed a dedicated and committed organization making a real impact on improving the lives of people in our region. I wish you great success for many more decades to come. Congratulations and thanks also to the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education, Professor Funso Aiyejina and all other facilitators for your contribution to the Anthology ‘Moving Right Along’.
- As I close let me extend heartfelt congratulations to the organizing committee for making sure this important Lecture Series is a success. Let me also just add that this year we are commemorating the 50th anniversary of the St. Augustine Campus – an important milestone for our Campus! As we look ahead, I firmly believe that by building strong partnerships with organizations such as the Cropper Foundation, we can chart the course towards a more robust and sustainable Campus for the next 50 years and beyond.
- Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.