



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

OFFICE OF THE CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

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Press Conference - 'UWI for Haiti'

Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago

Thursday September 2nd 2010 11.00 pm

Guiding Speaking Points

Salutations

- Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and Chairman of the UWI Campus Council - Mr. Ewart Williams
- Chairman, United Way, Trinidad and Tobago - Mr. Conrad Aleong
- Director of the International Office, UWI St. Augustine Campus - Mr. Sharan Singh
- Representatives from Exim Bank, RBTT Limited, United Way Trinidad and Tobago and other Banks present
- Other Members of UWI St. Augustine Campus Management and Colleagues
- Distinguished Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and gentlemen

- A very pleasant good morning!

- I would like to thank you all for coming. This is an important initiative for the UWI St. Augustine Campus and for me personally, as Campus Principal. Since the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January of this year, the regional University of the West Indies – through all its Campuses - has been lending support in an effort to re-build the tertiary education sector in Haiti and assist university students who need to complete their degree programmes. We would like to take this opportunity to share with you and with our Campus community information on some of our initiatives, to thank our public and private sector partners who have contributed to the UWI for Haiti Fund and to invite other corporate entities and members of the public to contribute so that our support for Haitian university students can be even greater!

- Let me begin by thanking the Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Ewart Williams who is also the Chairman of the UWI Campus Council - for agreeing to facilitate this press conference on **‘UWI for Haiti’** and for his contribution to our fundraising drive for Haiti. Governor Williams has played an integral role in engaging our private sector partners for this, we are truly grateful.

- Before I go any further, let me extend a special thanks to the private sector representatives who are present here today, United Way, Exim Bank and RBTT for their generous contribution toward the **‘UWI Haiti Relief Fund’**. These are acts of great kindness, which will go a long way in assisting Haiti’s reconstruction efforts. Thank you!

- As you are all aware, on the 12th January an earthquake devastated Port-au-Prince and other towns and cities in Haiti. The devastation in lives lost, property destroyed, and families displaced have been immense. Of particular note however, is the debilitating effect of the earthquake on Haiti's 'Human Resources', particularly in the education sector. Charge d' Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Haiti, His Excellency Max J. C. Alce reported in February that some 40 university professors, 1,300 teachers and 4,000 students had died. In addition, 13 university faculty buildings had collapsed and 2,394 schools had been destroyed.

- Since the earthquake, the UWI, led by our Vice Chancellor, Professor E. Nigel Harris has been working at several levels to provide assistance – humanitarian, sensitizing the various groups about Haitian issues and positioning ourselves to help with the mid to long term recovery and reconstruction. In particular, however, the UWI has chosen to focus its efforts on the rebuilding of the tertiary education sector as Haiti's recovery and repositioning will be very dependent on the expansion of its human knowledge and expertise.

- Toward this end, the UWI decided to consider amongst other initiatives, hosting displaced Haitian University students to complete their studies at our three resident Campuses in Jamaica (Mona), Barbados (Cave Hill) and here in Trinidad (St. Augustine). For this initiative the UWI St. Augustine has already decided to contribute over **US\$730,000** out of **US\$1.3 million** required to bring and support 70 Haitian students to the St. Augustine Campus. We

are currently in the process of approaching our government, various organizations and the community at large for the remaining funds.

- The St. Augustine Campus has agreed to facilitate 70 students from Haiti to complete their final year studies.
 - 41 from Engineering
 - 12 from Science and Agriculture
 - 11 from Dentistry
 - 1 from Management Studies
 - 5 from Veterinary Science to pursue the MSc
- The UWI St. Augustine Haiti relief fund opened just after the earthquake is now close to **TT\$90,000 plus the UWI Haitian Students' Fund is close to TT\$125,000 – a total of TT\$215,000.** I am therefore appealing to our governments; the private sector, our alumni, staff and students as well as civil society to partner with us in helping to raise more funds for these young students from Haiti in whatever way you can – living expenses, travel or books. We are looking to raise **TT\$3 million** to support the students while in Trinidad.
- Ladies and gentlemen it is my hope that this Press Conference will not only sensitize the population of Trinidad and Tobago to the work of the UWI in Haiti, but more importantly re-energize the 'UWI Haiti Relief Fund' through contributions from all sectors of society, so that we can help the Haitian people rebuild their lives. We are going to do this by building

their high level professional capabilities. No amount is too big or too small and it is not too late to help.

- You can make a contribution to the 'UWI Haiti Relief Fund' directly via the Republic Bank account: **160 135 528 301**. Please feel free to contact our International Office at The University of the West Indies for more information.

- We have seen natural disasters affect many parts of the world in recent times and where international relief has been brought to bear on these situations. We've also heard about the lack of such funding touching the lives of the people affected. We've also heard about the lack of transparency in the use of such funding. I want to assure the public that the UWI is taking a different but direct approach by bringing the Haitian students to our Campuses and touching their lives directly. You can be sure of this, and you will see them and can touch them also.

- Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your consideration and generous support.