



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES**

**Feature Address - The Preservation of Traditional Knowledge of First Peoples
International Day for the World's Indigenous Peoples - Tuesday, August 9, 2022**

**by
PROFESSOR ROSE-MARIE BELLE ANTOINE
PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR AND CAMPUS PRINCIPAL**

Good Evening Everyone

As I reflect on the events of the past few months, a world rendered fragile by disasters of every kind, flooding, forest fires, hurricanes, Covid-19, pandemics. . . earthquakes and debilitating climate change – when the very land seems to be rebelling - I cannot help but think that it is a pity that we marginalized our indigenous peoples,¹ our First Peoples- their way of life, their communion with and respect for Mother earth.

Today we worry about food insecurity, the destruction of the planet and our very survival. We search for answers. Yet, even as we reach toward the promise of technology and artificial intelligence, we are confronted with the awareness of their futility, our **frailty in the face of nature**. How easily the wheels of powerful industry grounded to a halt with one virus from the natural world – it turned upside down our carefully constructed so called development. But before our eyes, we have our First Peoples and all of our indigenous peoples, who, with their centuries of traditional knowledge, can teach us so much, not just about survival – but about learning to live with our environment, with Mother Earth as a friend, not an enemy.

Now, ironically, the World is turning back, in recognition that this way of life, in harmony with nature, is indeed best for our planet, our very survival. We are beginning to understand the value of the traditional knowledge that our First Peoples hold.

If we wish to unlock the key to genuine development and indeed sustainability, we must harness this knowledge, but first we must recognise our First Peoples and make their communities sustainable, vibrant and visible, reversing the centuries of neglect and abuse. We must seize the moment.

¹ While several indigenous peoples are known to have inhabited Trinidad and Tobago – the Nepuyos, Karinas, Lokonos (later renamed Caribs and Arawaks) Tainos, Chaguanese, Garifunas and Waraos, today only two groupings are today acknowledged, that is, the Nepuyos and the Waraos. Despite writings described all of the indigenous peoples in the country as “Taino”, these peoples, called “First Peoples”, do not self-identify as Taino.

What is Traditional Knowledge - Spiritual Backdrop and the Environment

What History and the Law Robbed us of

It is no longer disputed that the brutal march of history robbed the world, of valuable contributions of our indigenous peoples, particularly in relation to sustainable models of development BASED ON their traditional knowledge sources. Indigenous Peoples' rights focus on **Remembering, Recognising, Reclaiming** those contributions.

As we focus on the theme *Preservation of Traditional Knowledge of First Peoples*, we should understand that 'Traditional knowledge' for our First Peoples is more than just the tangible, the secular or the cultural. It includes the intangible – the philosophy and world view of First Peoples, which is part of their very spiritual existence.²

The world is waking up and remembering that Indigenous peoples have a unique and valuable approach to existence, which demonstrates creativity, conservation and utility, prioritising harmony with the environment and even a spiritual connection with the land. This is exhibited particularly in their agricultural, manufacturing and cultural practices, methods and products. One principle e.g. is that nature provides us with bounty but we must understand "how much is enough," – take only what is needed - what today we might call a **principle of environmental conservation** - now at the core of the UN's Sustainable Developmental Goals.

These have been identified as legal principles. In the *landmark case of Saramaka, v Suriname*, concerning the clash between land rights and extractive industry, the IACHR referred to the value system based on a spiritual relationship with the environment that is inherent in the indigenous peoples. It established a precedent for granting collective rights to land and its natural resources on the basis of historical occupation and cultural affiliation.

Indigenous peoples' belief system, premised on **community**, not individual greed and possession, is conducive to better ways to sustain the earth through broader notions of **collective rights** and responsibilities to the land, the earth. The concept of land and land cultivation is different to the legalistic, individualistic notions of legal title. Community ownership and responsibilities to the land extend to where one plants, or hunts or fishes – the notion that no one person owns the land and we must all take care of it.

Regrettably, many of these important traditional resources of indigenous peoples, tangible or intangible, have either been lost through plunder and exploitation, or remain vulnerable to extinction because of a failure to protect them for the benefit of mankind, even as the world thirsts for this very knowledge.

² This traditional knowledge does not separate "secular" or "rational" knowledge from spiritual knowledge, intuitions and wisdom. It is often embedded in a cosmology, and the distinction between "intangible" knowledge and physical things is often blurred. Indeed, holders of traditional knowledge often claim that their knowledge cannot be divorced from the natural and cultural content within which it has arisen, including their traditional lands and resources, and their kinship and community relationships".

Yet, harnessing and preserving this traditional knowledge cannot come without an acknowledgement of the harm done and genuine attempts to reclaim and repair.

Law and Shameful History - Double Jeopardy

We all know the history: The so called civilized, imperialistic Western world came, with their ideas of superiority, military might and different World view – to these harmonious lands of beauty. They plundered, pillaged, perpetuated cultural loss, violated rights and changed the course of history as they committed genocide.

We may be less aware of the scandalous role of the law in this process – how law was used as a weapon a tool of exploitation to destroy indigenous peoples' rights and to frustrate justice in a kind of double jeopardy.³ This did not only happen upon conquest, when Columbus came. No, this process of plunder, pillage and disenfranchisement went on for centuries. For example, the lands along the East west corridor that had been left to our First Peoples **by treaty**, were stolen, using legal tools. In short, in 1849, after they had been **placed** on communal land, for example, in the Arima Missions = 1320 acres, a new law / Ordinance demanded individual title to lands, which of course they did not have, since it was community land, so the lands were confiscated.

This approach to Kairi (Trinidad) as *terra nullis* (land without a people) opened the doorway to economic and social discrimination and exploitation of a people who became displaced, dispossessed and disadvantaged through deliberate and hostile forms of political and legal fraud and violence. While the majority of indigenous peoples residing on the North east West corridor were 'exiled' to Calvary Hill in Arima, originally a Mission site, this area cannot be described as a Reservation, since it has no special legal status.

It is difficult for a people so disenfranchised and displaced to hold on to their traditions.

But today I want to spend less time on history, because we all know this dishonourable history. I want to focus on the NOW – on HOW we can use this history, **make this history meaningfully connect to and intersect with our present reality** and our quite precarious future, **so as to reclaim this traditional knowledge? I see 3 main avenues:**

³ From the mid-18th century, the imperial powers and the Catholic Church used the law and ostensibly legal routes to displace First Peoples, robbing them of their lands, dignity and personhood. The land that the First peoples owned throughout this nation was stolen, yet again - through an alien legal process of individual title - distortions of property law and contract in how title was held. In indigenous culture, the land belongs to all, so that land is held in community, not individual property rights. This was an abuse of the legal process; a violation of the rule of law.

The story of Arima is illustrative. The entire East – West corridor were indigenous peoples' lands. As late as the 1830s the Burnley Commission played a major role in the deliberate misinterpretation of the original legal instruments of appropriation of the Mission lands in Arima, resulting in the Santa Rosa de Arima community being alienated from it. In 1828, after plunder they had at least 1320 acres. However, by 1849 subsequent British Officers began to treat Trinidad, as *Terra nullius*-a land without any people - or as virgin territory devoid of human habitation. This is notwithstanding the fact that it was still populated by several First Peoples; Nepuyos, Tainos, Waraos, Loconos and Arawaks. This was a deliberate ploy by the British Crown and its occupiers to justify the appropriation and redistribution of the Amerindian lands for 'progress' and exploitation.³ Governor Lord Harris (1846-1854), in 1849, passed the "New Territorial Ordinance". Land deeds had to be provided by the land owners to justify ownership of property. The indigenous peoples living in the Mission in Arima had no such land deeds as evidence of ownership, having been given the property *en bloc*, when they were displaced from their villages in Tacarigua and Arouca. Those who could not produce the deeds to pay the 'ward rates' had their lands confiscated by the Crown and sold. This 1849 Territorial Ordinance thus resulted in the expropriation of whatever remaining lands the First Peoples owned and the rescinding of their short-lived freedom from earlier bondage.

(1) Affirming a legal identity for First Peoples; (2) Reparations; and (3) Including First Peoples in a Green-Climate Smart Agenda and Just transition.

No Legal Identity

Notwithstanding some important developments, a state subvention, historical records/ archives, a day of recognition, archaeological findings, even DNA testing, this has not translated into the First Peoples being recognised as having, or being entitled to, a separate legal identity, such that the internationally accepted rights that should accrue to indigenous peoples, as outlined in the UN Declaration, could accrue to them. This itself weakens the ability to protect and preserve traditional knowledge.

A priority must be a deliberate and focussed effort to visibilise First Peoples as a group entitled to a separate ethnic and legal identity and moreover, a legal identity that is deserving of the rights, including access to justice rights, that are recognised under international law, as indigenous rights. As Chief often says, First Peoples is not a cultural group. It should be more than “window dressing.” A targeted legal infrastructure needs to be developed.

By way of examples: First Peoples will benefit from special legislation developed for the preservation of the Red House site, identified as a sacred burial ground of indigenous peoples, securing their access to religious rights and dignity

Reparations

While indigenous peoples under International law do have legitimate claim to land, another route would be through reparations. In TnT the loss of land, property is particularly heinous because of the double jeopardy I mentioned.

The 2 points - on reparations and traditional knowledge which emphasises sustainability and climate smart strategies are of course connected, since both require acknowledgement, respect and land.

And I envisage that Reparations can take the form of preserving traditional knowledge and encouraging sustainable development for the benefit of ALL.

The meagre 25 acres leased (short lease at that) can never compensate for such profound loss that catapulted our First Peoples into persistent poverty and denied them their identity. Just as there is no statute of limitations for murder, there is none for Genocide. The hand of righteousness is with the First Peoples. And for once - the Law is also on the side of the First Peoples.

Witness what is happening in Canada with the children who suffered and who died. After 80 years - come to light and retribution

I hope that both the state and the Church can lead the way in reparations - not only for land -the Church can open up the archives, let the truth be told so that we can reveal the anthropological record. We need to do that step to ground legal rights.

Our First Peoples deserve more than a token. Good faith, true understanding and true justice demands more . . .

Climate Smart Strategy - Different philosophy - In communion with the Environment

But it is in the climate smart strategy that I see the most pragmatic way forward. We must involve our First Peoples from whom we can learn so much.

How to treat with our waterways – First Peoples have been traversing and navigating the Caroni waters and other waterways successfully from time immemorial and can even teach us a thing or two about flood management. They understood the ebbs and flows of the water courses, the feel of the Forests, mountains and the fruit of these sacred spaces – in the preparation of medicinal and spiritual substances.

Cannabis cultivation – coca Colombia

We know them for their corn and cassava crops. I am sure few know that many of our staple foods today, cocoa, avocado, turkey, have indigenous origins. But there may be more viable crops. I again reference the emerging cannabis (marijuana) industry. We have already decriminalised and are about to pass legislation for an Agri-industry in cannabis. As Chair of the CARICOM Marijuana Commission, one of the concerns in our Report was the need to ensure that traditional farmers (the small man and woman), have a stake in the emerging cannabis industry and given assistance to do so. I suggest that this is an important opportunity for indigenous peoples, already grounded in natural herbal remedies, agricultural know-how and a sustainable environmental philosophy.

Btw, disagree with Sadjguru – besides there are other reasons for legalizing cannabis, apart from health, there is social justice, but let's leave that for another day. Got a gift of cannabis seeds from an indigenous young man.

I firmly believe that preserving culture, unique practices, along with preserving the environment that supports livelihoods, provide the gateway to sustaining a people and strengthening a nation.

There must be pragmatic routes to achieve sustainable objectives. Consequently, although First Peoples have a long history in agriculture and conservation, we must also mesh their ancient skills with the environment with responsible agricultural practices of the **modern world** – Here I see that the UWI has an important role to play in this. We must give them the tools to empower them to teach us.

Land

Repairing and preserving will require bold, utilitarian approaches. We must address the contentious issue of land as a first priority. It is through land and land rights that traditional knowledge can be preserved for the benefit of us all, enhance sustainability and reverse climate change with concrete steps.

Unsurprisingly, access to and ownership of land are also seen as top priorities by the First Peoples in realising their aspirations to access rights and justice. These rights are both civil and political, that is, their spirituality and religious rights which are closely aligned with their relationship to land and economic, social and cultural rights – land is inextricably bound up with the pursuit of and preservation of traditional knowledge. Precisely because of the spiritual world view that sees nature as sacred and a gift to all humanity.

This involves not only their ability to generate sustainable livelihoods based on their spiritual and ancestral links to land but are also closely connected with their right to maintain and develop their use of traditional medicines. To gain rights to land, as recognised under international law, however, the First Peoples need first to be fully clothed with a separate legal identity as indigenous peoples and recognised officially as entitled to such rights. This first step has **not yet** been taken, so in TnT it must be part of a reparations strategy, or a national climate smart strategy. Alternatively, of course, First Peoples could employ a litigation strategy as Belize, Suriname and other countries have done successfully. [*Mayan Alliance Case* from Belize]

In other countries, the issue of land rights has already been determined and acknowledged in law and practice. The remaining problems there have to do with attempts to abuse these land and property rights and even murder. As Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights - I had to deal with many of these – Brazil, Suriname, large companies- vs extractive industries etc. I represented indigenous peoples from all across the American continent and saw first- hand the threats to land rights and sustainability and even life.

Remember, that access to land and property is not just for their own use, or individual title or usage, but because their use of land results in a guardianship of heritage for all peoples, given the beneficial environmental and sacred land practices that First Peoples employ.

While the state has leased 25 acres to the First Peoples and they are appreciative it is not adequate, both because it is a lease and not a grant- and a short-term lease of only 30 years at that; and because it is a small parcel of land to carry out the planned activities and to enable sustainable livelihoods for indigenous peoples and the nation in the targeted Heritage Village.

This will create employment, reduce poverty and enhance the well-being not just of our First Peoples, but of the state and its citizens. **It is also an important step toward justice.** It is our 60th Independence. 60 is a time when the recklessness of youth has been displaced by a sombre reckoning of the need to preserve the future, to conserve, to make choices that are LONG TERM and not short term.

Other Ecological Activities and Projects

I know that there have been sporadic attempts by the state, the Arima Borough Council To give recognition that the First Peoples are knowledgeable about the

environment, land - are the real experts in so many of the skills that we now need to harness in terms of forests, flora, fauna, rivers, mountains, herbal medicines, agricultural methods have special knowledge of the forests etc. and to involve them in the green industry.

The Pyai, Cristo Adonis, for example, is regarded as an expert. This has resulted in the First Peoples being awarded a contract to operate a **reforestation project program**, initially in Aripo. Apart from forest expertise and sustainable hunting, he identifies trees to build houses. He is also a traditional healer using plants, making herbal medicines, indigenous food products and does coconut branch weaving to make baskets etc., all special indigenous skills which need to be passed on.

First Peoples are also engaged in specific activities to do with water resources and sustainability. **They check dams** in dry season for water irrigation, stones, preserve streams, use wood and other natural products to prevent erosion and are knowledgeable about managing the nation's waterways such as the Caroni swamp to prevent floods etc. The elders, are also experts in doing tours such as to the mountains of El Tecuche, Cerra del Aripo, and to the Kumaka cave etc. However, these forms of expertise need assistance for them to be sustained and succession planning is a priority. There is a fear that the knowledge is being lost to the detriment of both the community and the environment. The elders are generally eager to transfer indigenous knowledge and skills to young persons in the community, but funding is needed to train others. If not, they will have to deviate from these activities and do different things other than indigenous activities to sustain themselves.⁴ This will be a great loss to the community, its traditional knowledge and its sustainability.

I applaud these - but more must be done and it should not be seen as handouts, or ad hoc activities - but genuine recognition of the value FP bring to the conservation goal. First Peoples **deserve** the opportunity to work toward sustainable communities and environments, **not as a privilege or favour, but a right firmly established in law.**

How can we use the concept of rights to bring about meaningful change and productive value to the indigenous peoples of our country? Many ways:

It could involve a symbolic return of indigenous lands, using up **unoccupied lands** in the country waiting to be tilled. This would be not just for their own use, but because their use of land results in a **guardianship of** our heritage for the benefit of us all. First Peoples can partner with the state, The UWI and even the private sector to engage in meaningful largescale green projects. These will sustain not just the community but the nation.

The Original Climate Smart Peoples - Solar Energy

⁴ One example of this knowledge is in the area of healing and medicinal plants. The cocoa panyols and others consulted their shamans to cure them of a range of ailments whether of a purely physical nature or not. Healing was done to the accompaniment of secret prayers.

We should go further. We can make real First Peoples spaces energy resilient and sustainable by using renewable energy, solar systems and the like. These are our Original Climate Smart Peoples. I am working on acquiring funding to make the **Heritage Village Solar Powered** - I have already written a proposal and I want to assure you that the UWI STA will partner with you on your agricultural pursuits – only Agric campus in the UWI. I hope the state will partner with the UWI to get this done – a model solar energy village.

I call on the state to make our First Peoples the CUSTODIAN of our treasured Nature spaces, forests, waterfalls . . . together with a sound food security and solar energy plan, in partnership with our UWI, STA.

Need for First Peoples Champions

I have no doubt that once our First Peoples begin to aggressively and successfully pursue a sustainable green development plan, there will be predators who will **covet** the green gold and water resources, just as happened elsewhere in the region, Brazil, Columbia touristic exploits in Central America – the Garifuna, the First Nations in the US. I visited Arizona and saw that threatened land near the Grand Canyon, the Mapuche in Chile; Belize, Guyana, etc. The state, NGOs will have to protect these communities. First Peoples will need champions.

Role of IP Other Layers of Law –Tools of Environmental Law and IP

Intellectual property law will also be important in the thrust toward sustainability -to **harness the traditional knowledge** bases of our First Peoples by providing them with concrete tools of law to better protect and preserve their own interests and resources. Once the green revolution gets going, there will be spin-offs, different innovative products to complement the wealth of indigenous knowledge products. They will be susceptible to theft in a world where things do not have value unless possessed, signed sealed and delivered. Intellectual property laws can protect First Peoples and their creations - copyright, trademark, patent, geographical indications and traditional knowledge laws. Plans in Agro Business, Arts & Craft, plant maintenance, feed into this vision. For example, the 'creation of a commercial Kalinago brand.⁵

Hence in 2019 the Faculty of Law, UWI St. Augustine held a highly successful workshop *Training Workshop on Intellectual Property and Environmental Law for Indigenous Peoples* to equip First Peoples. The Workshop was oversubscribed and was the first time that all of the various indigenous peoples had come together in one project.

If we do not act now, the rape, this time, not the physical rape, but the rape of their ideas, their very identity, will not only continue but be magnified. First peoples' unique cultural traditions, farming methods, food, medicine etc. are subjects of IP but are also expressions of their very identity and personhood. As such, they are part of the spectrum of rights.

⁵ that solidifies the prominence of the First Peoples into the cultural fabric of TnT" (UNDP workshop 2017).

Other Legislation Conflicts with Indigenous Peoples' Rights

While there are no specific laws protecting the rights of the First Peoples, there are existing laws **which conflict with** and in some cases, directly violate the inherent rights of indigenous peoples. In particular, First Peoples' rights to practise their religious beliefs and spirituality, and their economic, social and cultural rights to sustainable livelihoods, are often compromised. These have yet to be addressed by the state. For example, The First Peoples rights are compromised by laws of the land such as those that prohibit "smoking in public spaces", restricting their ability to perform their smoking ceremonies. "Smoke" and "Water" ceremonies are part of the rituals of the indigenous peoples as they practice their spirituality.

Conservation Laws that prohibit hunting - the "closed season" for certain forest animals, and access to water ways also conflict with First Peoples rights and practices and traditional meat diets. This **requires special exemptions** to existing laws or provisions in the laws of the land to permit such practices.

Such laws also come into conflict with the letter and spirit of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.⁶ First Peoples have no laws to protect them, or legal provisions identifying them as deserving of **special consideration**. **Again, the legal identity problem.**

General laws are also needed to be enacted or enforced to protect the environment - the forests, such as to prevent forest fires, litter, etc. and in so doing, **indirectly** protect the rights and practices of First Peoples.

Road map for Inclusion and change in an Oil & Gas Economy

It is not too late. Moving forward there must be a national policy that is coherent and consistent.

As an oil and gas producing country, oil and gas is the major economic earner, but also the most major polluter, so our task is that much more difficult as there are important factors to be balanced. I believe a sound, coherent Green Agenda with First Peoples at the centre, recognising the vast spaces that need to be made ecologically safe, will have huge benefits and long-term cost effectiveness for our nation.

For the green economy to succeed there must be responsible practices in our oil and planning sectors – a facilitative co-existence. No more Oil spills killing our fish e.g. Preservation of water resources. We will remain an oil and gas economy for a long

⁶ The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: adopted 13th September 2007: The preamble recognizes, among other things "the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources". It also recognises the urgent need to respect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples affirmed in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements with States. Article 4 states: Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

Article 24 states: Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.

Article 25 states: "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard."

time. We must find strategic ways to reduce our carbon footprint within a just transition framework. I believe that the First Peoples have a role to play in this endeavour within a well thought out inclusive and coherent road map for change. A significant 60th birthday gift.

Development must be inclusive of solid environmental and food security goals, not insular and uniformed as it is now. This is no utopian wish. The UN Global Food Report warns of plant species vital for feeding the world becoming extinct at an alarming rate threatening our existence. This is a direct result of man's ill-treatment of the earth, through poor land use. It is imperative that we change radically our attitude to the earth – make a philosophical shift in our relationships with the environment.

In this era of huge food insecurity and climate change challenges, what better time to be examining how we can learn from our First Peoples' practices and philosophies and devise impactful strategies grounded in law to save our Earth. We are called to remember our ancestors, our First Peoples and their loving embrace and care of the Earth.

Visibility and Building Sustainable Indigenous Communities

There is also the continuing struggle against the threat of extinction, perhaps not physically, but the **loss of identity** and culture as traditional knowledge is forgotten. First Peoples' communities must be strengthened. Preserving culture, traditional knowledge, including language, and unique practices and preserving the environment that supports livelihoods provide the gateway for this goal. In TnT – much work needs to be done to reverse the invisibilisation. Right here in Arima, there are indigenous peoples who are disconnected with the community. We need to bring everyone on board. [I am told that even the wife of our Hon. PM has First Peoples ancestry.]

Political Representation

I hear the call of the First Peoples. A priority is the obtaining of political office in the form of an automatic seat in governance. This is in keeping with their historical significance and loss and a means to securing their sustainability. It is not far-fetched. In some countries there are quotas for Indigenous in national Parliaments – Colombia, Brazil, even Guyana. It is feasible and indeed wise to have FP sit at least on district Councils where there are significant First People populations such as Arima and in South. Certainly, a more inclusive approach.

Some Priorities Leading to Greater Access to Justice – Funding, Legal Infrastructure

Apart from laws,⁷ emphasising/ highlighting the value products of our indigenous communities will also assist in attracting the “funding assistance for the development of projects that they themselves wish to engage in. Other priorities and needed tools

⁷ Given the under-developed state of the legal infrastructure relating to First Peoples, a key priority should be activities geared toward assisting First Peoples to obtain concrete legal protections in the law, such as special legislation, constitutional status, exceptions in existing law to secure their civil rights and their economic, social and cultural rights. Funding and human resource support is also needed for succession planning, to ensure that young First Peoples can be trained in their culture and religious practices so that they can be sustained.

include agricultural expertise and equipment capacity building; and - Transfer of technology and communication expertise for use in the Heritage Village and beyond.⁸

The traditional knowledge residing in our First Peoples community will become even more important in future generations, as we fight to control our destiny. If we are to adequately reclaim and protect and harness First Peoples enterprise and endeavor, we need more than lip service. We need HARD Law, informed policy and pragmatic approaches.

We deserve this gift to ourselves, to lead us to a true path to development, prosperity and peace.

Personal Pride and Congratulations

In closing let me say that I am absolutely delighted that my first speaking engagement as Principal of the St. Augustine Campus of The University of the West Indies is here in Arima, my childhood home. Not *gens Arime* since my parents were not from Arima, but here since the 1960's and witnessed many Santa Rosa celebrations.

Congratulations to our First Peoples as we celebrate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

⁸ Other proposals include:

- Logistical and funding support for transfer of indigenous skills linked to climate change and justice (environmental) and food security such as reforestation, water management etc.
- Small enterprise development with an emphasis on innovative indigenous green products supported by technical intellectual property know-how to address poverty index and further environmental goals.

List of Potential Actors and Partners

- Legal and anthropological scholars from the UWI and other universities;
- Private sector interested in green products;
- Funding agencies such as EU, UNESCO etc.
- Government ministries
- NGOs committed to Climate Change and Climate Justice.