

The University of the West Indies

Cave Hill Campus

Welcome Remarks – UWI Games 2017

Thursday, May 25, 2017

A glorious, golden good afternoon to all of you. On behalf of the Cave Hill Campus it gives me great pleasure to welcome you, our talented athletes and our dedicated officials from Mona, St. Augustine and Open Campuses, to the stunningly beautiful, Cave Hill Campus. Next door we just opened a new building that pays respect to the architectural heritage of China. It houses the Confucius Institute and many more offices. I am pleased to state the two trade Unions, WIGUT and BWU will now have offices in the new building. Cave Hill honours its commitments and epitomizes sound industrial relations practices. On the

brow of Free Hill, we have the African inspired Ashante Stool, our main administration Building. And when you have all competed and we crown the UWI 2017 Champion Campus which will be basking in the glow of gold, you can feel refreshed and rejuvenated by resting awhile at our brand new Mandela Freedom Park. We are undertaking measured, incremental infrastructural renewal, but who knows what future architectural wonder await us at Cave Hill? We do know Cave Hill is committed to re building the Faculty of Science and Technology as part of transforming ourselves into a Smart Campus, all of this within the context of the Triple A, 2017-2022 UWI Strategic Plan.

Enhancing the athletics and academics of Sport in the Caribbean is part of the vision of the new strategic plan. Promoting student centredness, wholesome student life and regional understanding constitute defining characteristics of the University and it is why we are

gathered here today. Today, two outstanding athletes will receive the Vice Chancellor's Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year Award and we congratulate them. At the end of the sporting competitions which begin today we will crown the Campus that has amassed the most points as the UWI Sports Champion. Which Campus will it be? As Principal of the Cave Hill Campus and Pro Vice Chancellor for student centredness across the four campuses, I am truly impartial and objective. I leave all that partisan stuff to Deputy Principal, Professor Clive Landis who has worked extremely hard with his team to deliver in Cave Hill's style a fantastic 2017 UWI games, thank you Professor Landis. To underscore my impartiality I have decided to wear a dress of black and gold; black to symbolize the rich and fertile soil of our seventeen Caribbean member countries, and gold to symbolize, the sunny yellow rays of the Caribbean

sun, and of course I pay respect to our UWI crest and its motto, light rising from the West.

Our collegiality and compassion as The University of the West Indies do not inhibit our competitive spirit. We play and perform with passion. That is the West Indian way.

That is The UWI way. We have a Caribbean flair for spectacular accomplishment which UWI Games 2017 will enable us, as a vibrant sporting and academic community, to put on display over the next eight days.

So ladies and gentlemen, allow me to savour this moment, and to share with our regional audience the Caribbean brilliance that is assembled in this space. Our sports women and sportsmen are indeed worthy of our applause before they head onto the field of play, and as we, ourselves, move to take up our positions on the sidelines and in the stands to cheer them on. I feel privileged as PVC for Student Centredness to view this splendid sight this

afternoon, to behold this vibrant sea of tropical colours of red, blue, orange and yellow; a yellow, I am told, that some of these Cave Hill colleagues are already referring to as gold, not me. I am just looking forward to the sunny, yellow rays of the Caribbean sun shining on all of us.

The UWI staff and student games which occur in alternating years provide us with opportunities for nurturing camaraderie and forging new friendships. This year it is the turn of our student athletes to showcase their talent and prowess. These young women and men will test months of intense training in a bid to capture golden glory for their respective campuses and, perhaps, even catapult some of them onto the international stage as professional athletes.

The UWI Games is a manifestation of the University's belief in the importance of the personal, professional, intellectual and psychosocial development of student athletes through

competitive sports. We firmly believe that investing in the enhancement of athletic excellence among students benefits the entire society, including future employers.

It is for this reason that all employers, especially those in the corporate sector, should be particularly interested in the effective execution of these games and the successful performance of the student competitors. Our students' academic and physical training help them to become productive, well rounded citizens. The determination and focus of these athletes can prove transformative in the growth and success of many Caribbean business enterprises and public sector institutions. So to corporate, governmental and civil society partners, we certainly welcome and thank you for your interest and partnership in these Games and in UWI activity overall.

I also firmly believe that national and regional business communities need to pay very keen attention to the rapid

growth and diversification of national and regional sport. Just yesterday, a local journalist was commenting that over the past weekend in Barbados, there were eight separate sporting competitions, all relatively well attended. The business and events management communities should focus on the growth of sport, not simply as a leisure activity but as a lucrative leisure industry, a sub economy of sporting leisure. When this is combined with tourism, as many countries are doing, it is capable of having a stimulant effect on our regional economies. Of course, this entails nurturing a sporting culture across the region but it is well worth the effort. The evidence proves sport is an industry capable of yielding significant economic returns to individuals and countries.

The sporting industry continues to have a major impact on economies across the world with sport contributing hundreds of billions of dollars annually to the economies of

numerous countries such as the US, Europe and Australia. Sport creates employment in many forms including construction, maintenance, concessions, management, merchandizing, sport medicine, sport sciences, sports law, insurance, broadcasting, food & catering, accommodations, transportation, coaching, and scouting,

Sport already contributes significantly to many Caribbean economies. For example, Earl Jarret, the General Manager of Jamaica National Building Society (JNBS) is quoted as saying, “Funding sports is an outlay which provides tangible returns, I believe our country recognizes that there is significant economic benefit to be gained from the investment in athletics.” In 2011 the Jamaican Amateur Athletic Association partnered with the Swedish television broadcaster IEC to broadcast the Jamaica Invitational Meet, to more than 160 million households in 25 countries around the world. We have seen the impact and recognition

which has been credited to Jamaica's sporting product.

Apart from the obvious economic returns associated with sporting activity, educational, health and social benefits are derived from the pursuit of sport. It helps to build self-esteem, increase well-being, and lower the crime rate.

Through sport, communities are brought closer. Sport has a major impact on boosting national and regional pride, and building social cohesion.

Ladies and gentlemen, students and colleagues, persons who participate in sport tend to be healthier and happier, with increased savings and benefits to the economy and society. Sport participation increases motivation, social relations, self-esteem, time management, self-management and self-discipline. By providing an outlet for energies and talent, sport has proven it is a robust and rigorous agent of social and economic change whose benefits last long after the final whistle. Athletes, go forth and enjoy these 8 days

of passionate but safe competition. I welcome all our students and want you to excel as you enjoy the hospitality of the Campus and our host country, Barbados. As host I welcome all of you to experience the comforting neutrality of my black and Gold.

Have a very enjoyable and safe 2017 UWI Games, I thank you.