



## Press Release

### Caribbean Science Foundation mobilizes local and international expertise in quest to spur regional economic development through science, technology and innovation

**Bridgetown, Barbados, November 22, 2011** – Experts from the Caribbean Region and the Caribbean Diaspora gathered on 18, 19 November 2011 at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre in Bridgetown, Barbados to discuss how science, technology and innovation (ST&I) can be effectively used to diversify the Region's economies. The workshop was organized by the Caribbean Science Foundation (CSF) with support from the Caribbean Diaspora for Science Technology and Innovation (CADSTI) and several other sponsors. The CSF is the first nonprofit funding agency specifically dedicated to enhancing scientific research and development in the Caribbean.

Under the theme, "**Mobilizing the Diaspora for Caribbean Development through Science, Technology and Innovation,**" the workshop harnessed the energy of representatives from business, government, academia, and non-governmental organizations who came from various Caribbean countries, the USA, the UK, Canada, and Germany. The main message was that the region is poised for change, but needs assistance in many areas - particularly in the translation of S&T research into economic benefits.



**A distinguished panel** officiates the opening of the CSF workshop. From left to right are CSF governing council members: **Dr. Arnoldo Ventura**, a former science adviser to Jamaica's prime minister, **Senator Franka Alexis-Bernardine**, Grenada's Minister of Education, and **Dr. Cardinal Warde**, MIT electrical engineering professor and Chairman of the CSF's Governing Council.

#### A few highlights from the two-day workshop

- Cutting-edge scientific research posters were presented by students and researchers from: UWI (Cave Hill and Mona Campuses), the Guyana Ministry of Education, the University of Montreal (Canada), the Caribbean EcoHealth Programme, the Atlantis Mobile Laboratory (Dominica), the Bio-Tech R&D Institute (Jamaica), the University of Maryland (USA), The Johns Hopkins University (USA), Sri Krishnadevaraya University (India), Yogi Vemana University (India), Dartmouth College (USA), Barbados Community College, the Aquatic Ecosystem Protection Research Division (Canada), the University of Trinidad and Tobago, and the University of Technology (Jamaica).
- Prominent educational policy experts in the Region advised conference delegates on strategies for implementing education reform that would include a strong mix of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects. Those experts included Dr. Didacus Jules, Registrar of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), Senator Franka Alexis-Bernardine, Grenada's Minister of

Education, Senator R. Orlando Marville of Barbados, and Dr. Winston King, UWI-Barbados education professor.

- One of the region's top financial experts, Dr. DeLisle Worrell, Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, captured the attention of all with his presentation of a new economic "theory of value".
- The Honorable Norris Prevost, a Member of Parliament in Dominica, described the E-one Caribbean project, which seeks to engage the Caribbean diaspora in reinvigorating their home countries by volunteering and providing financial support toward capacity-building efforts at home through non-governmental organizations.
- Mr. Geoff Seyon, Executive Chairman of Medullan Inc., a leading eHealth consulting firm, discussed how his company's software engineers in Trinidad & Tobago are designing critical applications for the US healthcare industry.
- Dr. Basil Burke, CEO of UWI Consulting, emphasized the role that The University of the West Indies can and must play as a catalyst for growth and development of the CSF.
- Some of the UWI students in attendance agreed to help design a competition to recruit more students to pursue STEM degrees and careers. That offer was readily adopted as the first educational project for the CSF Governing Council Education Committee (Dr. Jeanese Badenock, Dr. Sheena Francis, and Prof. Maya Trotz) which said the project provides a framework to develop "CSF champions" through mentorship and training.

### **Selected Workshop Comments**

"This first CSF Workshop was strategically held at the same time and place as the annual summit of the Barbados Entrepreneurship Foundation so as to concurrently build synergy with the Region's private sector," said Dr. Cardinal Warde, Chairman of CSF's Governing Council. A Barbadian-born professor of electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Warde is himself an entrepreneur, having founded two technology companies: Optron Systems, Inc. and Radiant Images, Inc.

"The meeting brought into sharper focus the very important role and objectives of the CSF," said Mr. Dodridge Miller, a CSF Governing Council member and CEO of regional insurance giant, Sagicor Group of Companies. "Our intervention into the current course of development in the Region is timely and required if future generations are to have a credible chance at engaging the rest of the world on near equal terms." Sagicor is now working with CSF's education committee on a project to develop sustainable Caribbean communities.

"We welcome this initiative to set science and research at the heart of regional efforts to boost innovation and business," said Mr. David Elek, Global Director of Emerging Markets at Springer, one of the world's largest academic publishers and a co-sponsor of the conference. "Springer knows that many of the authors of tomorrow will come from emerging markets, including the Caribbean, and we wish to foster any effort that will improve skill-sets needed to publish research in top international journals." Led by Mimi Hendricks, Springer's Licensing Manager in the Region, the publishing firm already has agreements in place with the UWI that provide faculty and students access to its online journals database.

### **Fund-Raising**

Going forward, the CSF will continue its push to raise US\$13 million over the next three years to promote education reform and technology-based entrepreneurship in the Region. Persons or organizations interested in supporting either the educational and/or the entrepreneurship projects of the CSF may do so at <http://caribbeanscience.org/donation/> or by communicating with Prof. Cardinal Warde ([warde.csf@gmail.com](mailto:warde.csf@gmail.com)).

For more information on the Caribbean Science Foundation, visit <http://caribbeanscience.org>, subscribe to the **Caribbean Science Foundation Facebook Page**, and follow **@caribsf on Twitter**.