

PRESS RELEASE

September 24, 2010

CARIBBEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION LAUNCHED IN PORT OF SPAIN

On September 21, 2010, the Caribbean Diaspora for Science Technology and Innovation (CADSTI) led by its President, Dr. Cardinal Warde, Professor of Electrical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, launched the Caribbean Science Foundation (CSF) in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago with the assistance of CARISCIENCE. Senator, The **Hon. Fazal Karim**, Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education in the Government of Trinidad and Tobago gave the Keynote Address and launched the CSF on behalf of **Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar** who was attending the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York.

Also among those present at the launching ceremony which was held at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad were: Senator, the **Hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh**, Minister of Education of Trinidad and Tobago; Senator, the **Hon. Franka Alexis-Bernadine**, Minister of Education of Grenada; The **Hon. Glen Phillip**, Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports, Information Technology and Telecommunications and Post, St. Kitts and Nevis; **Ms. Myrna Bernard**, Director of Human Development, CARICOM; **Dr. Kwame Boafo**, UNESCO Director and representative for the Caribbean; **Mr. Cesar Toro**, UNESCO Programme Specialist in Natural Sciences; **Dr. Rüdiger Klein**, Executive Director, All European Academies; **Dr. Sergio Pastrana**, Representative, the International Council for Science, Cuba; **Prof. Claudio Bifano**, Former President Academia de Ciencias, Fisicas, matematicas y Naturales, Venezuela; **Mr. Lennox Chandler**, Chair of the Caribbean Council of Science and Technology; **Prof. Winston Mellowes**, Foreign Secretary of the Caribbean Academy of Science; **Dr. Nelson Moreno**, President of the Caribbean Scientific Union, Dominican Republic; **Dr. Arnoldo Ventura**, Former Science Adviser to the Prime Minister of Jamaica; **Prof. Jean-Louis Mansot**, Faculte des Sciences Exactes et Naturelle, Universite de Antilles et de la Guyane, Guadeloupe; **Mr. Robert Riley**, CEO of BP-Trinidad; **Mr. Nicholas Brathwaite**, CTO of Riverwood Capital, and member of the Board of Directors of the CSF; **Dr. Basil Burke** of UWI Consulting and member of the Board of Directors of the CSF; **Prof. Baldwin Mootoo**, Treasurer of CADSTI; **Mr. Hollick Rajkumar**, Managing Director, HRC Associates and member of the Board of Directors of the CSF; and **Senator-Prof. Harold Ramkissoon**, Executive Secretary of CARISCIENCE and member of the Board of Directors of the CSF. The attendees were not only from the English-speaking Caribbean, but also from Guadeloupe, Suriname, Guyana, Cuba, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic.

In his Keynote Address, Minister Fazal Karim praised the work of CADSTI and CARISCIENCE that led to the establishment of the CSF. He stated that “The Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education is committed to creating a critical-thinking, innovative, entrepreneurial and knowledge driven society.” Later in his remarks, he said to the CSF, “In fact, I invite you to become a standing advisory committee to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education on science, technology and innovation...” Minister Karim went on to say “I take this

opportunity to challenge the CSF to assist the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in defining the policy objectives that will be taken to the legislature of Trinidad and Tobago.”



Senator The Hon. Franka Alexis-Bernadine addressing the delegates. Seated at the head table (from left to right) are: Senator-Prof. Harold Ramkissoon, Prof. Cardinal Warde, Dr. Kwame Boafo, Senator The Hon. Fazal Karim and Mr. Hollick Rajkumar.

The mission of the CSF is to assist with the diversification of the economies of the Caribbean Region, and to help raise the standard of living. Specifically, the CSF aims to help:

- (a) **Stimulate technology-based entrepreneurship** - by identifying and funding science and technology projects in new and existing enterprises that are relevant to the economic development needs of the Region.
- (b) **Accelerate education reform that supports technology-based entrepreneurship** - by promoting and funding programs that: (i) focus on the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) disciplines, (ii) business and entrepreneurship education, and (iii) foreign languages and communication skills in schools, universities and other educational venues.
- (c) **Provide scientific and engineering advisory services to Caribbean governments** - by working with CADSTI to leverage the expertise that resides in the Diaspora.

Most of CSF's resources (funding, technical expertise, business expertise, and international collaborations) come via CADSTI which is mobilizing the Diaspora and mining these resources for the benefit of the CSF and the Region (see <http://cadsti.org>). The goal is to raise approximately US\$ 13M over the next three years from a wide variety of sources to support 15 to 20 research and development projects and several educational programs. The Board of Directors of the CSF consists of distinguished leaders in business, finance and academia from

the Caribbean and the Diaspora. The headquarters of CSF are temporarily located in Bridgetown, Barbados.

A science forum titled *“Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship – The Way Forward for the Caribbean”* followed the CSF launch. One of the most significant highlights of the forum was a session at which young scientists and entrepreneurs proudly described their on-going cutting-edge scientific and engineering research projects - a clear illustration of the talent that exists in the Region. Also notable at the forum was the agreement among the leading scientific organizations in the Region to work cooperatively and efficiently, and avoid duplication in carrying out the scientific and educational tasks that need to be accomplished in the Region.



Some of the young scientists and entrepreneurs (along with Prof. Cardinal Warde - seated in the front center) who presented the results of their ongoing science and technology research projects.

However, a most surprising event was the many individuals and organizations who voluntarily wrote personal checks at the forum to support the work of the CSF. The first check came from the family of Prof. Judith Blair of the College of the Bahamas, and the first corporate pledge came from the Barbados Public Workers Cooperative Credit Union Limited. This is, indeed, a testament to the will of the people to change the status of science and technology in the Region; the people have given the CSF a mandate to be the catalyst for change.

Sponsors of the launch of the CSF included the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, BP Trinidad and Tobago LLC, TWAS Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (TWAS-ROLAC) and UNESCO.