

UWI & ACS Sign MOU Committing to Sustainable Development, Decolonisation & Regionalism



MEDIA RELEASE

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PORT-OF-SPAIN

“This day we take another critical step in the deconstruction of the colonial Caribbean.”

These were the opening words of Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, at the virtual signing event for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between The University of the West Indies (UWI) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), held on October 27, 2020. The MoU, signed in the English, Spanish and French languages, provides a framework for both institutions to cooperate on resource mobilisation, integration and furthering the sustainable development of the Caribbean region. In practical terms, the agreement will allow for the exchange of information, collaboration in organising of conferences and seminars, research and innovation, and training, especially in the areas of: disaster risk reduction, trade, transport, sustainable tourism and the protection of the Caribbean Sea.

Vice-Chancellor Beckles said: “The University of the West Indies is resolute in its agenda to decolonise the structures inherited from history... Only the integration of our Caribbean world can fully unleash the potential of our people. It is our mutual intention to advance the process of regional cooperation and consciousness.”

Noting “this MOU between The UWI and ACS will give greater sustainability to our integration activities,”

Sir Hilary underpinned the centrality of this alignment between The UWI and ACS beyond an English-based framework, and within the context of the greater Caribbean region. He explained that

this began with The UWI's bold move, last year, to forge partnerships with Cuba's University of Havana and Universidad de los Andes (UNIANDES) in Colombia. It was further cemented with the University of St. Maarten's incorporation into The UWI system earlier this month. He made special reference to the University's strategic priority to be multilingual by 2023 as part of the "preparation of an entire generation of students and young people to take command and control of their Caribbean space."

This signing made The UWI a Social Partner of the ACS. Expounding on the significance, ACS Secretary General Dr. June Soomer said: "As the 13th Social Actor within the ACS, you will be engaging with an organisation that was established in 1994, at the height of the decolonisation process. It was an organisation that CARICOM agreed should be formed as we made our way into the world."

"I'm very happy today that we are signing this agreement that will give the University the opportunity to engage with us on some very forward-thinking and engaging issues. We have been working with the university on geospatial data management, we have the opportunity to further that engagement, as well as a variety of other areas. Concerted action is about implementation and we have a restructured organisation fit for purpose."

Photo Captions

Signatories to The UWI-ACS MoU, The UWI Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles and ACS Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. June Soomer.

About The UWI

For over 70 years The University of the West Indies (The UWI) has provided service and leadership to the Caribbean region and wider world. The UWI has evolved from a university college of London in Jamaica with 33 medical students in 1948 to an internationally respected, regional university with near 50,000 students and five campuses: Mona in Jamaica, St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago, Cave Hill in Barbados, Five Islands in Antigua and Barbuda and an Open Campus. As part of its robust globalization agenda, The UWI has established partnering centres with universities in North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe including the State University of New York (SUNY)-UWI Center for Leadership and Sustainable Development; the Canada-Caribbean Institute with Brock University; the Strategic Alliance for Hemispheric Development with Universidad de los Andes (UNIANDES); The UWI-China Institute of Information Technology, the University of Lagos (UNILAG)-UWI Institute of African and Diaspora Studies; the Institute for Global African Affairs with the University of Johannesburg (UJ); The UWI-University of Havana Centre for Sustainable Development; The UWI-Coventry Institute for Industry-Academic Partnership with the University of Coventry and the Glasgow-Caribbean Centre for Development Research with the University of Glasgow.

The UWI offers over 800 certificate, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate degree options in Food & Agriculture, Engineering, Humanities & Education, Law, Medical Sciences, Science & Technology, Social Sciences and Sport.

As the region's premier research academy, The UWI's foremost objective is driving the growth and development of the regional economy. The world's most reputable ranking agency, Times Higher Education, has ranked The UWI among the top 600 universities in the world for 2019 and 2020, and the 40 best universities in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2018 and 2019, then top 20 in 2020.

The UWI has been the only Caribbean-based university to make the prestigious lists. For more, visit www.uwi.edu.

(Please note that the proper name of the university is The University of the West Indies, inclusive of the "The", hence The UWI.)

About the ACS

Established in 1994, the Association of Caribbean States is an organisation for consultation, cooperation and concerted action in the Greater Caribbean. The Organisation's work is focused on: cooperation, disaster risk reduction; sustainable tourism; trade, transport & external economic relations; and the protection of the Caribbean Sea. The ACS has 25 Member States, 11 Associate Members 7 Founding Observers and 29 Observer States.